

## Chapter One: The disappearance of Harry Potter

Hermione Granger was lying in her bed deep in thought and almost sick with worry. She hardly ate and slept and was constantly looking outside for some reason. She had even lost several pounds and she was hardly overweight as it was. Even her parents had started to worry about their daughter but she refused to say anything about the reason why she was so worried. So she kept quiet and continued to worry and stress.

The reason why she was worrying was because her best friend in the whole world, one Harry James Potter, had vanished. It was the only word that could express what had happened to him. You see, Hermione and her friends had just finished their fifth year at the magical school called Hogwarts. It had been a disastrous year for them as at the end of the year Voldemort had tricked Harry into going to the Ministry of Magic to save Sirius. Harry had been in a right state once he received the vision of Sirius being tortured by Voldemort and several Death Eaters. She had tried to warn him that it might be a trap to lure him away from Hogwarts but Harry still went. She had to admit that he had tried everything he could to find out if it was indeed a trap or not.

Together with Ron, Ginny, Luna and Neville, she and Harry had ridden Thestrals and went to the rescue of Sirius. Of course, when they arrived there they only found Lucius Malfoy and several other Death Eaters waiting for them. It had all gone downhill from there but the worst was the fact that Sirius got blasted into the Veil of Death by his cousin Bellatrix Lestrange. The Veil of Death was exactly that, a veil that once someone touched it, even a little bit, caused instant death. Even though she herself had been wounded badly, it was Harry who was hurt the most.

Once they got back to Hogwarts Harry was somewhat distant and seemed very hesitant to talk to any of them. She had tried to talk to him but he was being stubborn. When Harry Potter didn't want to talk about something, well he just didn't talk about it. She had persisted until she noticed that he was getting angry so she backed off immediately. She didn't want to endanger her friendship with him by nagging too much. They had said their goodbyes at King's Cross once the Hogwarts Express had arrived but that was the last time she had seen or heard anything from Harry. She wasn't the only one.

It was now close to half of August and only a few more weeks until the new school year started. Harry had been missing for almost two months. She still remembered the night when Prof. Dumbledore came to her at home telling her that Harry had simply vanished from Privet Drive. No note or anything. The room destroyed beyond repairs and everything that even suggested that Harry Potter had been back at his relative's home was simply gone. Not a trace could be found. Harry wasn't the only one to have disappeared. Nymphadora Tonks, an Auror and member of the Order of the Phoenix had disappeared the same night as Harry. That made sense as she was the one to guard him that night.

Hermione had asked Dumbledore if he was sure that nobody had seen Harry or even heard from him but Dumbledore even admitted that his monitoring devices keyed to Harry had gone silent. Why the man had such devices keyed to Harry, Hermione didn't know but she didn't like it one bit. Still she kept quiet about her feelings. According to Dumbledore this could only mean one thing and that was that Harry had been captured and killed by Voldemort or one of his followers.

She simply refused to believe this. She knew in her heart and mind that Harry was still alive somewhere. There was no way that Harry would get caught by Voldemort. He was too smart and strong for this. She knew that Harry was not always truthful about his intelligence; she had seen it sometimes. A look of knowledge or understanding when he thought nobody was looking but he almost never showed it. She didn't know why he did this but she didn't question him about it. Everyone had a right to a few secrets and she knew a lot more about Harry than anyone else even Ron. One only had to look at Harry's achievements to see that he was different from any other wizard. He was capable of producing a Patronus that could scare away over a hundred Dementors, he had competed in a tournament designed for seventh years students and won, he had faced Voldemort time and time again and lived to tell the tale. No ordinary wizard could do such things. No, there was something special about Harry Potter all right.

Still, that didn't make her feel any better about Harry disappearance earlier this summer. She had begged the Headmaster to inform her about any searches they did for Harry but he refused. He didn't want to give her false hope he said. It was the first time that she had been angry at the man. She was Harry's best friend so she deserved to

know what they were doing to find him. She sighed loudly and got up out of bed and headed for the bathroom. She knew she needed to shower and get something to eat. Harry wouldn't be happy if he heard that she was making herself sick for his sake.

Hundreds of miles away Amelia Bones was having her morning tea when contemplating the recent events. A week before the end of the school year the Ministry of Magic had been forced to admit that the Dark Lord You-Know-Who had indeed been revived. Just like Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore had been saying all along. While she had nothing to do with the campaign the Ministry had run against both individuals she felt bad about what Harry Potter had been through. Her niece Susan had complained many times in her letters about Umbridge's treatment of Harry but unfortunately there was nothing she could do about it. Dolores Umbridge had friends in high places and one of them was the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, himself.

Amelia smirked as she knew all too well that the political career of Fudge was over. To have covered up the return of the strongest dark Wizard of the recent ages was not something the public would forgive easily. She thought it was poetic justice. She and several other had asked that Harry's claims would at least be investigated but Fudge refused any investigation of any kind. He made it quite clear that anyone going behind his back would not only lose their job but also spend some time in Azkaban. Still now that the cat was out of the Wizard's hat, Fudge wouldn't be Minister of Magic much longer.

"Good riddance." Amelia said putting her cup of tea down. She had never liked the incompetent man and she knew all too well that he had taken bribes from those who wanted some law or something in their favor. Sadly, while Fudge was an idiot, those paying him weren't and so she had never found any proof. She cursed under her breath as she thought about the year they had lost in preparing for a new war. Fudge had cut any and all funding for training new and existing Aurors, reducing the Magical police force drastically. If war broke out tomorrow, she and her Aurors would get slaughtered she was sure of that. Already one Auror had vanished. Nymphadora Tonks was one of the youngest Aurors under her command but also one of the more talented ones. She suspected that she was somehow involved with Dumbledore's group 'The order of the Phoenix' but she hadn't talked to the young woman about it yet. Now

she had vanished a few weeks ago, no trace could be found of her and she feared the worst. If this new war became anything like the previous one, Nymphadora Tonks was only the first of many that would have the same fate.

"Tippy is sorry to be disturbing Mistress but Mistress has company." A voice said from next to Amelia, scaring her in the process.

"Company? I don't expect any company." Amelia said to Tippy, her loyal house-elf for many years. "Who is it?"

"Tippy cannot pronounce guest's name." Tippy said sadly. "Is too difficult for Tippy. But Misses has pink hair."

There was only person that Amelia knew that sported pink hair and that was her missing Auror. She quickly got up from her chair and bolted to the door, almost running over Tippy who squeaked and 'popped' away. Amelia apologized knowing that Tippy would be able to hear it but continued racing to the door. When she saw a young woman with pink hair she relaxed and smiled.

"Auror Tonks, you have some serious explaining to do." She said sternly before grabbing the young girl in a hug. "What happened to you? Are you alright?"

"I'm fine Madam Bones." Tonks replied quickly. "I'm afraid we don't have much time. I need you to get Susan and follow me."

"What? Why?" Amelia said not understanding. "What are you on about?"

"Please Madam, I'll explain everything later but time is of the essence." Tonks pressed on. "If you want I'll take an oath vowing that no harm will come to you or Susan."

"That's not necessary Tonks but can you please enlighten me why we should leave everything behind?" Amelia said.

"He's coming." Tonks said with fear evident in her voice.

Amelia's eyes went wide as she needed no explanation as to who Tonks was talking about. 'He' could only mean You-Know-Who and if he was coming here, it could only be for one thing. To kill her and

Susan. She wasted no time and called Toppy ordering her to start emptying the library and put everything in the Bones Family vault. The Bones' Library was an extensive library with thousands of books on magic and had been the envy of many other Magical families. Some books were priceless and if people like You-Know-Who got their hands on them there was no telling what could happen.

"Madam Bones, if you would give me permission I could call someone to help Toppy." Tonks said trying to help.

"Permission granted." Amelia quickly said.

"Dobby?" Tonks called out and instantly a house-elf appeared next to her.

"Harry Potter's Tonksie called for Dobby." The house-elf said excited. "What can Dobby do for Harry Potter's Tonksie?"

"Dobby, can you help Toppy with emptying the house and library?" Tonks said ignoring Amelia's look at how Dobby addressed her.

"Dobby will help." The house-elf said and 'popped' away.

"Please Ma'am, I know you have questions but we need to hurry." Tonks pleaded. "They could be here any minute. I promise you that everything will become clear once we're out of here."

"Very well but I expect a full report on where you have been and how you are aware that You-Know-Who is after my life." Amelia nodded with authority before she headed upstairs get her niece out of bed. She didn't bother to knock and stormed right into Susan's bedroom. The girl was still sleeping and Amelia felt kind of bad to wake her in such a way but she knew they didn't have any time to lose. She took Susan by the shoulder and started shaking her.

"Susan, wake up." Amelia all but shouted.

"A-Auntie? W-what's going on?" Susan said half awake.

"You need to get up. We're in danger, You-Know-Who is headed our way." Amelia said opening Susan's dresser and throwing her some clothes.

Susan didn't need to be told twice and jumped out of bed, already stripping down and grabbing the clothes her aunt gave her. In record time, Susan and Amelia were back downstairs where Tonks was waiting patiently. The room had already been stripped bare by Toppy and Dobby and all around them valuable items and memorabilia were disappearing into thin air. Amelia was grateful for this as those items were part of her ancestry and her life.

"Now what?" Amelia asked Tonks.

"Now we take this portkey and go pick up someone else." Tonks said holding out a battered baseball hat.

"Who are we getting?" Susan asked curiously.

"One of your classmates in Hogwarts." Tonks smiled. "Hermione Granger and her family."

"Granger?" Amelia asked surprised. She had heard a lot about this girl from Susan over the years. Apparently the girl was a Muggleborn Witch and was rumored to be the smartest Witch of her age. She was also one of Harry Potter's best friends and had joined him in the battle at the Ministry of Magic. The more she thought about it, the more she knew that Harry Potter was involved in this but for the life of her she couldn't understand why You-Know-Who was after her and Susan.

"This has to do with Harry Potter doesn't it?" Amelia questioned.

"Yes but for now let's go." Tonks urged. "I don't want to be here when Voldemort arrives."

The three women quickly grabbed hold of the portkey and Tonks muttered the password to activate it. Instantly they disappeared from the house only leaving the two house-elves to further empty the manor. They didn't take much longer and they both 'popped' away as soon as their job was finished.

Ten minutes later the sounds of people apparating could be heard around the manor. A dozen Death Eaters and Voldemort himself had just arrived but found nothing but an empty house. Voldemort was furious and ordered the manor to be burned down but not before showing his displeasure by torturing a few of his followers.

He wanted Bones get rid off as his spies in the Ministry had picked up rumors that she was next in line for the position of Minister of Magic. That was something he wanted to avoid as all his contacts said that she was firmly light orientated and incorruptible. If someone like her managed to become the Minister, he wouldn't be able to overtake the Ministry as easily as he wanted. He wondered why the manor was empty but perhaps she had decided to flee. Once the burning manor collapsed he ordered his Death Eaters to disperse until he called for them again.

Susan, Amelia and Tonks arrived a few streets away from the Granger house. Tonks quickly led them towards the right house and promptly rang the bell. Along the way she had to dodge several questions from Amelia and Susan but she refused to tell them anything, saying that she rather explained it all once everyone was safe. Tonks heard someone opening the door and was greeted by Mrs. Granger.

"Yes, can I help you?" The woman said politely.

"Mrs. Granger, we've never met but I'm Nymphadora Tonks, a friend of Hermione." Tonks explained. "Is she home? I really need to speak with all of you."

"Tonks? You're the young woman that's gone missing together with Harry!" Mrs. Granger realized with a shock. "Quickly, get inside and I'll call Hermione."

"Thank you." Tonks and her two companions followed Mrs. Granger inside.

"Hermione has been worried sick about you and Harry." The woman said. "She hardly slept or ate these past few weeks. We were almost going to consult a doctor for her. I'll go get her."

Hermione was just done with her shower and had gotten dressed when her mother stormed into her room scaring her in the process.

"Mom, what happened?" Hermione asked frightened.

"There's a young woman who goes by the name of Nymphadora Tonks waiting for you downstairs. " Her mother said with a smile. Hermione stood there for a second before she raced downstairs in

the search for Tonks. When she saw Tonks standing there with Susan Bones and another woman she just launched herself into Tonks, hugging her closely.

"Wotcher, Hermione, that's one powerful hug you've got there." Tonks chuckled while hugging the girl back.

"Where have you been? Where's Harry? Is he alright?" Hermione fired one question after another.

"Slow down." Tonks smiled. "Harry's fine. In fact, I'm here to take you to him. You're in danger and Harry wants to keep his best friend and her family safe."

"So he's fine?" Hermione said relieved. "He wasn't captured by Voldemort?"

"Nothing of the sort." Tonks said laughing. "I promise to tell you everything once we're safe. For now, we need to have a talk with your parents."

Mr. and Mrs. Granger had been standing there watching the spectacle and were relieved that their daughter could finally stop worrying a bit. Now that she knew that Harry was safe and sound she would bounce back to her usual self in no time. They wondered what was going on when the Tonks girl said that they were in danger.

"Can someone please tell me what's going on." Dan Granger said a bit angry.

"Mr. Granger, I apologize but it is necessary." Tonks said. "You and your family are in grave danger."

"What do you mean?" Emma Granger said fearing for her family. "Has this something to do with this Voldemort character?"

"It has everything to do with him, Mrs. Granger." Tonks nodded. "I don't know how much Hermione has told you but to simplify things, Voldemort is evil personified. He's killed dozens of people and will stop at nothing to get what he wants."

"But what does he wants with us?" Emma wanted to know. "What have we done to anger this man"



"Nothing mum." Hermione interjected. "He just hates everyone who isn't a Pureblood or who isn't on his side. He wants to rule Britain with him as the leader of the Purebloods."

"So just because we aren't Magical, he hates us?" Dan asked.

"It's more complicated than that but yes, that's the gist of it." Tonks nodded. "He's after one person in particular and your daughter is one of that person's best friends. I'm sure you are familiar with the story of the Boy Who Lived?"

"You mean Harry?" Emma nodded.

"That's right, I can't go in detail right now but keep that story in mind for later today." Tonks nodded. "A few weeks ago Voldemort and Harry fought again and he had to flee. He's been pissed off ever since and he's started to plan on attacking those who opposed him in any way."

"So he's after me and the others who joined Harry at the Ministry?" Hermione gasped. "What about the others?"

"Don't worry, as far as I know they are all safe." Tonks reassured her. "The Weasleys are with the Order of the Phoenix. Luna is away on holiday with her father and Neville's home is quite protected as well. You're the only one who's in danger at the moment. That's why I came to get you all. Harry want to keep you safe."

"Where is Harry anyway? What happened to him?" Hermione questioned Tonks.

"Sorry Hermione but now is not the time for answers about Harry." Tonks refused to budge. "I promise that you'll see Harry by the end of the day."

"So why should we leave with you?" Dan Granger said. "No offence but what could you do to protect us? I'm a fair shot and I'm sure I could take a few Wizards down if I wanted."

"Mr. Granger, I'm sure you can protect your family against most people." Tonks shook her head. "But not against these maniacs. While you could possibly take out one or two of them, you wouldn't

stand a chance against the lot of them. I can promise you that those monsters wouldn't kill you outright. They would torture you and your family. They would force you to watch as they rape and beat your wife and daughter. They could even make you force yourself upon them."

"I would never hurt my daughter or Emma like that." Dan shouted outraged.

"I know that Dad." Hermione said hugging her father. "But there's magic that can do that. You wouldn't even consider it wrong. It wouldn't be you but in a way it would still be you."

"Hermione's right; Death Eaters are vicious in their torture and they love nothing more than to inflict pain. Be it psychically or mentally." Tonks agreed. "That's why I came to get you all to safety. Harry considers Hermione as one of the people he loves the most. But everyone is aware of how close they are and so it would only take so long before Voldemort finds a way to hurt you."

"Please Daddy, you have to listen." Hermione pleaded. "She's telling the truth."

"Mr. Granger, I know we haven't met before but my name is Amelia Bones." Amelia said stepping forward. "I'm Head of the Department of Law Enforcement. I can vouch for the things that Tonks has just told you. The first war was scene to many a cruel killings and those are only the things that we know of. Just a few minutes before we came here Tonks came to get me and my niece, Susan, warning us that You-Know-Who was coming for us. We had only left for a few minutes when I felt the wards on my home fall meaning that the house is destroyed. She's speaking the truth."

"Very well." Dan sighed knowing that he had no choice. He wouldn't be responsible for getting his wife and daughter hurt and killed by those monsters.

"Thank you Mr. Granger." Tonks said relieved. "Now don't bother packing, I have someone who will do that for us."

"Oh?" Emma wondered.

"Dobby?" Tonks called out once more. Dan and Emma gasped as they saw a small creature appearing out of nowhere but seeing as the others didn't react they kept their mouths shut. "Dobby, can you pack everything in the house and put it in the storage element we showed you?"

"Dobby can do so." Dobby nodded before 'popping' away again.

"Alright, everyone grab hold of this." Tonks said taking a long rope out of her back pocket. "It's a portkey. Mr. and Mrs. Granger, hold on tight and do not let go."

Everyone gathered around Tonks and grabbed the rope, holding on tightly. Tonks muttered a password, activating the portkey and together they disappeared from the Granger house. Seconds later they appeared in a dark alley with Dan and Emma slightly ill from the sensation of using a portkey. Hermione helped her parents get up and looked around.

"Where are we?" Hermione asked the question they all were thinking.

"We're in Muggle London." Tonks stated. "Don't worry, the area is warded not to let anyone notice us. Here, I need you all to read this." Tonks then passed a small piece of paper around. "Remember the address."

Everyone looked at the address written on the paper and committed it to memory. Susan, Emma and Dan didn't know what was going on but the rest quickly figured it out.

"You used the Fidelius?" Amelia said shocked. The Fidelius Charm was a very difficult and taxing charm to use even though it was well worth the protection it gave. Nobody but the Secret Keeper could give away the secret the Charm helped to keep hidden.

"So what happens next?" Susan asked not understanding the fuss about some charm.

"Look that way and focus on the address you just read." Tonks said pointing between two large apartment buildings.

Everyone did what they were told and focused on the address. To their shock and surprise a huge building appeared between the two others and now they realized what had happened.

"You used the Fidelius to steal a whole apartment building?" Amelia shouted at Tonks. "Do you have any idea what kind of trouble this could cause?"

"We didn't steal it." Tonks protested. "I mean, not really. We're going to give it back afterwards....probably."

"A building just appeared between two others." Emma deadpanned to her husband who nodded in shock. "Dan, a whole building appeared out of nowhere." She elbowed him again.

"I know." Dan said out loud. "Stop elbowing me."

"Alright let's stop wasting time." Tonks said before guiding everyone inside the building. Tonks led everyone into the foyer while Hermione was busy explaining how the Fidelius Charm worked to her parents and Susan. Needless to say the three of them were very impressed with the possibilities of such magic. Tonks told them to get into the elevator and together they went to top floor of the building.

"What is on the other floors?" Emma wanted to know.

"Oh they're mostly unused but we used a few floors as a training room and such." Tonks shrugged. "There about 10 floors with each 5 apartments on each floor so we had more than enough room."

"So why put the whole building under the Fidelius?" Amelia questioned.

"It was easier this way." Tonks answered. "We wanted to make sure we had enough room just in case."

"In case of what?" Susan asked.

"In case the worst happened and we need to get some more friends relocated." Tonks said simply. "This is war and people will lose their homes and families. Harry wanted to give those people some place to stay if necessary."

"That sounds like Harry alright." Hermione smiled softly. "He hates to see others suffer."

"And yet he refuses to see that he suffers as well." Tonks agreed sadly.

When the elevator finally stopped moving and the doors opened Tonks let the others into what seemed to be the most luxurious loft they had ever seen. There were large windows letting in sunlight, making it just the right temperature. A large living room with several couches made out of the finest materials. A large kitchen with a cooking island in the middle was just next to the living room and joined together by a bar with several beautiful barstools. On the other side was a large dining table with eight to ten chairs. In the corner of the room was set of stairs that led to the second part of the loft where the bathroom and the bedrooms were located.

"Wow, this place is beautiful." Emma said softly.

"Harry thinks it's a bit much but I like it." Tonks agreed with woman. "I feel at peace here and the view is great."

Susan and Amelia where impressed and had to give Tonks credit for choosing a place like this to live in. Like the Auror had said, the place had a homely feeling and indeed the view was magnificent. They could only imagine what it would be like to watch the sunrise or sunset from here.

"Why don't you make yourself comfortable? I'll be right back." Tonks said moving towards the stairs. "I'll go check on Harry for a moment."

"Wait, I want to see Harry too." Hermione said walking up to Tonks.

"Sorry Hermione but not yet." Tonks stopped her in her tracks. "I ask for a bit more patience. Please?"

"Urgh, fine but you'd better have a very good explanation for all of this." Hermione said after a few moments.

"I promise you'll understand everything by tonight." Tonks nodded happily. "I won't be long so why don't you get comfortable and I'll be right back."

Hermione nodded and sat down next to her parents in the couches. Susan and Amelia were still gazing at the view before they too went and sat down. Suddenly Dobby appeared next to them and told the Grangers that their house was emptied and everything had been stored safely. The Grangers were happy to hear that as there were a lot of precious memories and souvenirs amongst their possessions. Dobby then served them some refreshments while they were waiting for Tonks to return. All of them had only one thought in mind and that was there had better be one hell of a story behind all of this.

## Chapter Two: A trip into the past, part one

When Tonks returned the rest had been watered and fed by Dobby and now all of them were waiting to get their questions answered. Tonks laughed as they all shouted their questions out loud and none of them were willing to back off. Each of them wanted their question answered first.

"Okay, everyone calm down." Tonks shouted. "Why don't I start? I'm sure all your questions will be answered by the time I'm finished."

"Very well but this better be good." Amelia and Hermione glared at Tonks.

"Fine but before I start there will be a few rules to follow." Tonks said. "Firstly, and I'm looking at you Hermione Granger, no interruptions. Hermione, if you interrupt me I'll ban you from the library for a whole day. And trust me, the library is huge."

"What? That's not fair." Hermione said outraged. Then in a softer voice she asked. "How big is the library?"

"Remember the Black Library you weren't allowed to see?" Tonks smirked when Hermione nodded. "Well, it's easily twice as big. Remember, interrupting is punishable with a one day ban, and believe me when I say I'll enforce it."

"Fine." Hermione sighed.

"Great. Second rule, everything you learn about Harry's private life will remain that way." Tonks said sternly. "I won't ask for a magical oath but please respect this. If there is something I cannot talk about please don't press on. I won't tell no matter what. Agreed?"

"Agreed." Everyone nodded their understanding.

"Thank you. Thirdly, there will be things that you'll discover about Harry." Tonks said. "Yes, even you Hermione will learn that Harry has kept quite a bit from you. He asked me to tell you that he didn't do this because he didn't trust you; as a matter of fact, you being here proves he does, but because he wanted to keep some things hidden."

"I understand." Hermione nodded. "I always knew that Harry still kept secrets from me. Maybe you'll just be confirming things for me."

"Good and lastly, when you meet Harry don't mention anything about the death of Sirius." Tonks said. "Madam Bones, I know that you think Sirius Black betrayed the Potters to Voldemort but that's not true. It will become clear throughout the story so please don't judge just yet."

"I guess I can give him the benefit of the doubt." Amelia nodded.

"Thank you." Tonks smiled. "Our story starts in the summer after Harry's second year at Hogwarts. As you may or may not know, Harry had an eventful year at Hogwarts with the heir of Slytherin petrifying Muggleborn Wizards and Witches. In a big way these events showed Harry that if he wanted to survive Hogwarts he would have to change his ways but more on that later. After being dumped back at his relative's place, he had a terrible summer. Especially when his uncle's sister, Marge, "Here Tonks growled angrily when she said the name. "spent several days at their place. Marge had always treated Harry badly and that year was no different. She insulted him and berated him for being who he was. But worst of all was when she called Harry's parents useless drunks and basically called his mother a whore."

Here Amelia, Susan and Hermione gasped at the audacity of calling someone like Lilly Potter such a terrible name. Lilly was loved by everyone she met and many were proud to call her a friend. When she and James had died, there had been many who shed quite a few tears. In fact, she and James were almost just as famous as their son was thanks to their role in the death of Voldemort.

"Yes, it made Harry very upset and he unwillingly used some accidental magic to inflate her like a balloon." Tonks said with a small smile. "Knowing that he would be in trouble Harry fled the house and made his way over to Diagon Alley. It was there that I met Harry for the first time."

"What? But I thought the two of you only met each other last year." Hermione said loudly.



Tonks just smiled and grabbed her wand before conjuring a white board. Another flick of her wand and words appeared on the top of the board. Everyone chuckled as they read the lines 'Number of days Hermione is banned from the library'. Under the words appeared a small line indicating 'one day'. Hermione looked at Tonks in horror before sitting down, pouting like crazy.

"You were warned, baby girl." Dan chuckled.

"But Daddy..." Hermione complained.

"Let's move on shall we?" Tonks said clearing her throat. "We have much ground to cover. So like I said before I was interrupted, it was in Diagon Alley that Harry and I met for the first time."

## FLASHBACK

Harry was currently sitting under a tree working on his essay about Witch Hunting during the Middles Ages. It was an assignment by Professor Bins, the teacher of History of Magic. The class itself was dreadfully boring as he droned on and on about the Goblin wars and neglected everything else that had happened.

This assignment had been smooth sailing once he had gotten some help from Florean Fortescue from the ice cream parlor. Despite being a simple shopkeeper the man was quite knowable about medieval witchcraft and Harry had remembered everything he could use in the essay. While he was formulating how to finish his argument about the ineffective way the witch hunters worked he suddenly heard some commotion coming from his right. Looking at what was happening he saw people jumping out of the way for another wizard who seemed to be coming his way. Another person was close on his heels and seemed to be trying to catch him.

"Stop him." The second person yelled out. "He's a thief."

Harry noticed that the second person was a young woman with pink hair and he wondered why she had colored her hair that way. Nonetheless, he decided to help her out and just when the thief passed him, he put out his right foot causing the man to trip and slamming into the ground hard, effectively knocking him out. Harry winced as he was sure the man had broken a few teeth on the pavement.

"Thanks." The young woman said to him while she grabbed the man and put some manacles on him. "If he had gotten away I would've been in so much trouble."

"Don't worry about it." Harry said smiling. He was surprised when the girl made no motion of recognizing him in any way. Usually people started to fuss around him and stared at his forehead. This girl however did nothing of the sort and he liked it.

A few seconds later several more Wizards showed up and the woman handed the thief to them saying that he had been caught at stealing from a shop and resisting arrest. The girl didn't mention anything about Harry helping her and he appreciated it immensely. The last thing he wanted was drawing even more attention to himself.

"Very well Junior Auror Tonks, I'll await your report." A dark skinned man said to the young woman. "Continue with your patrol."

"Yes sir." The woman saluted. When everyone was gone she let out a breath of relief and turned to Harry.

"Thanks for your help." She smiled at him. "He was a quick one. I don't think I would have caught him before he could disappear on me."

"It's no big deal." Harry said. "Thanks for not mentioning me to your colleagues."

"I figured that you didn't want the extra attention. I'm Tonks by the way." The woman now known as Tonks said.

"Nice to meet you, Tonks." Harry said smiling. "I'm Harry but I guess you already knew that."

"I used my brilliant observational skills to come to that conclusion already." Tonks smiled. "So what are you working on?" She said pointing to his parchment on the ground.

"Oh just some assignment from Binns." Harry sighed. "Medieval Witchcraft and Witch hunts."

"Blimey, is Binns still teaching at old Hoggy Hogwarts?" Tonks said shocked. "I remember his classes and boy, were they ever so boring."

"You went to Hogwarts as well?" Harry asked her surprised.

"Of course, Hufflepuff class of '91." Tonks said proudly. "Ah, that seems so long ago now."

"So you're an Auror now?" Harry wanted to know. It seemed like a very interesting job to him.

"Nope, I'm just an Auror in training." Tonks admitted. "I'm in my first year of Auror training. It's been rough, let me tell you. Doesn't help that I'm clumsy as they come."

"I'm sure you'll do great." Harry reassured her. "I mean, you seem pretty strong to me. I bet you could have kicked that guy's ass if you used magic to stop him."

"Maybe." Tonks said smiling. "Thank for trying to cheer me up. I'd better get going before my boss gets back. I'll see you around Harry."

"Bye Tonks." Harry nodded and waved as she disappeared into the crowd. 'Tonks? What a weird name. Maybe it's a nickname of some sort. I'll ask her later.' He thought before he went back to his essay.

END FLASHBACK

"That was the first time I met Harry." Tonks smiled at the memories. "I was actually quite surprised at seeing that he was such a small boy. Like so many I had been told stories about the famous Harry Potter, The Boy Who Lived but I knew instantly that those stories were just that. Stories. The real Harry was totally different and I liked the real Harry much better."

"Did you meet him again?" Susan asked her.

"Oh yes, Harry and I met up almost every day as Junior Aurors like myself are always assigned to patrol in Diagon Alley." Tonks nodded. "It didn't take long before the two of us became real close and by the end of the summer we considered each other best friends."

"That seems a bit farfetched." Dan said to Tonks. "I mean, he was a thirteen year old boy and you were what, eighteen? I don't know many people that age who would consider a thirteen year old as a friend, let alone their best friend."

"I admit, it's unusual but Harry and I connected right away." Tonks nodded. "Harry is very mature for his age even if he doesn't always show it. His upbringing and the things he had done and seen have changed him. I wouldn't say it literally took his childhood away but it might be close."

"It's true Dad." Hermione agreed. "I've seen Harry act like an adult at some times. Usually he's a boy who goofs around most of time but when the time calls for it, Harry transforms into a whole different person."

"Exactly." Tonks said smiling at Hermione. "Anyway, by the end of summer Harry had introduced me to Hedwig and we promised to stay in touch throughout the time he was at Hogwarts. I didn't mind because I didn't have many friends and Harry said he liked to talk with me as he felt comfortable around me."

"But how come I never saw Harry sent any letters to you or Hedwig delivering letters to him." Hermione questioned before she slapped her hand in front of her mouth, realizing what she had done. Everyone chuckled as Hermione groaned loudly in frustration when Tonks drew another line at the board.

"As I said before I was interrupted again, Harry and I decided to exchange letters from that day on." Tonks glared at Hermione but they all could see a smile was threatening to break through. "On the first of September I actually went to say goodbye to him at the platform. Nobody but Harry knew I was there and nobody saw me leaving either. It was our little secret and while it may seem childish, I liked our secret friendship."

"That was the year that Sirius Black escaped from Azkaban." Amelia said suddenly.

"Yes it was." Tonks nodded. "I only found out late during the summer and I told Harry about it immediately. It was quite a shock for him and I made him promise not to take any risks. Imagine my

surprise when I received his first letter that very night saying that Dementors had attacked him on the Hogwarts Express."

"What? I never heard anything about such a thing happening." Amelia said outraged.

"Just because you never heard about it, doesn't mean it didn't happen." Tonks snorted. "I'm sure Hermione here will confirm what I'm telling."

"Tonks is telling the truth Madam Bones." Hermione said remembering that very event. "The Dementor entered our compartment and instantly went for Harry. In fact, if it hadn't been for Professor Lupin, who was sitting with us, Harry would surely have been Kissed."

"Unbelievable. That damned Fudge almost killed Harry Potter with his foolishness." Amelia said angry.

"I'm afraid it won't be the last time you'll curse our minister." Tonks sighed. "Because of him we're in a very bad place to fight a war."

"I'm well aware of that Auror Tonks." Amelia said. "It was one of the many things that made me want to curse the man multiple times over. Unfortunately, there was nothing I could do to stop him."

"I understand." Tonks nodded. "Let's continue the story. So Harry was now in his third year and we were exchanging letters almost daily and poor Hedwig couldn't keep up with us. Sometimes we had to take breaks from writing each other because she was too tired to fly." Tonks chuckled at the thought. "One day Harry wrote me a letter asking me to meet up with him at Hogsmeade as it was a weekend when students could visit Hogsmeade when they had a waiver signed by their parents. Of course, Harry's uncle had refused to sign the waiver so Harry couldn't visit Hogsmeade. Therefore I was quite surprised when he asked me to meet up with him."

"So what did you do?" Emma asked.

"I went to Hogsmeade of course." Tonks grinned. "I wasn't about to miss seeing my friend. Surely enough, when I was waiting behind Gladbags, Harry's floating head appeared before me. Let me tell you,

it was only the fact that I was too shocked that I didn't hex the living daylights out of him."

## FLASHBACK

Thanks to the twins and his trusty Invisibility Cloak Harry had managed to sneak out of Hogwarts without any trouble. He was excited because he would see Tonks again. He had missed talking to her and having fun like they did during the summer. Sure, they exchanged letters almost daily but it just wasn't the same. Suddenly he grinned as an idea popped into his head. He knew she would probably kick his behind afterwards but it was just too much of an opportunity to pass on.

He slowly made his way towards Gladrags where Tonks would be waiting and made sure not to make any noise. When he saw her standing there, he almost let out a giggle in anticipation but managed to hold it in. Moving to right before her, he held his breath before he removed the cloak from over his head, making it as his head was floating in the air.

Tonks who hadn't expected anything of the sort screamed loudly before she understood what he was doing. She pulled the cloak from his body and glared at him. Harry was fighting to hold in his laughter but in the end he just let go. He laughed as Tonks kept glaring at him.

"Think you're being funny are you, Potter?" Tonks said going for her wand.

"Y-yeah, a little bit." Harry said between giggles. "You should have seen your face, Tonks. It was hilarious."

"Haha, I'm glad giving me a heart attack amuses you." Tonks said. "You do know that I'll get you back for this, don't you?"

That stopped Harry's laughter immediately as Tonks could be downright vicious in her pranks. He had seen her pull pranks on some of her colleagues during the summer. Deciding to save what could be saved, he changed the subject hoping that she would forget about her revenge.

The two of them spent several hours together just talking about things and drinking a few butterbeers that Tonks had bought for them. Both of them were happy to be able to spend some time together, knowing that it would take quite a while before they could meet again.

Suddenly Tonks saw her chance and grabbed a handful of snow and shoved it down Harry's collar into his shirt. Harry shrieked at the cold sensation and started jumping around trying to get the snow out of his shirt. Meanwhile Tonks was laughing like crazy at seeing Harry.

"Argh, that's cold." Harry said glaring at his friend.

"Seems that what they're saying is true." Tonks smiled. "Revenge is dish best served cold."

"Oh yeah?" Harry said grabbing some snow before making a snowball. "Let's see how you like it."

"You wouldn't throw a snowball at little old me, now would you?" Tonks said batting her eyes at him. She had hardly finished speaking when a snowball hit her straight in the face. She shivered and wiped the snow out of her hair before glaring at Harry. "That's it Potter, you're going down."

"Bring it on." Harry said accepting the challenge.

The next ten minutes were spent by throwing snowballs at each other. When they were done both of them were soaking wet and cold but both of them had big grins on their faces showing that they enjoyed their little game. Unfortunately, it was time to get going so Tonks quickly dried both of their clothes before saying goodbye. They promised to keep writing each other at least once a week.

END FLASHBACK

"He pulled the same thing on me and Ron." Hermione laughed. "That damned Invisibility Cloak of his."

"Quite right." Tonks smiled. "Well, we spent a few hours together not far from Hogsmeade where nobody could see us. I used a nifty little 'notice me not' charm to keep everyone away from us so we could

talk without having to worry about being discovered. after I kicked his scrawny little butt for scaring me like that, he joined up with you and Ron while I returned home."

"An Invisibility Cloak? Does such a thing actually exist?" Emma said surprised.

"It sure does." Tonks smiled. "Want to see?"

"Yes please." Dan and Emma said together. Tonks nodded and raced upstairs before returning with Harry's cloak in her hands showing it to everyone.

"Looks like an ordinary, old cloak to me." Dan said after looking at the cloak.

"Observe." Tonks smirked and pulled the cloak over her head. Instantly she disappeared from view shocking Dan and Emma. Even Amelia was very impressed with the magical item while Susan was trying to find where Tonks had disappeared to. Suddenly, Hermione yelled as she felt someone pinch her bum. She turned around but Tonks was long gone.

"Tonks, I can't believe you would do that." Hermione shrieked.

"What? What did she do?" Emma asked her daughter.

"She pinched my bum." Hermione said embarrassed.

"That was for interrupting me again." Tonks said reappeared as she removed the cloak. "I could add another day to the board if you like that better?"

"No!" Hermione all but yelled making everyone laugh again at her love for books and libraries.

"Amazing. Imagine the things you could do with this." Dan said to Emma.

"It's an amazing piece of work, alright." Amelia agreed. "Where did Harry get this?"



"He inherited it from his father." Tonks answered. "It's been in the Potter family for generations and it's passed on as an heirloom from father to son. It's one of Harry's most prized possessions so I better return it right away." She said before going back upstairs. When she returned she sat back down and continued the story.

"The rest of the year went by pretty fast and soon it was Christmas." Tonks said. "We exchanged small gifts to each other. They were simple things but both of us were very happy with what we received from each other. There was only one dark spot on Christmas that year." Here she looked at Hermione, who seemed to get what Tonks was referring to. "Harry also received a Firebolt that year from a unknown person. However before he could tell me about it was confiscated by a teacher after Hermione argued to her that it might be a trick from Sirius Black. Hermione, let me tell you that I would have done the same thing."

"I was just scared for him." Hermione admitted softly. "He had already fallen off his broom during that Quidditch match, when those Dementors attacked him once more. I didn't want anything to happen to him."

"You did the right thing, Hermione." Tonks said to the younger girl. "It was a very suspicious gift but you failed to take in account Harry's feelings about the broom. You see, to him flying means freedom. It's the one thing that allows him to leave all the fame and stress of being Harry Potter behind. So when his Nimbus was destroyed, it broke his heart. That Firebolt was an escape of some sort. So when it was taken away again, he was angry at being stuck again."

"I didn't realize flying meant so much for him." Hermione admitted softly.

"Harry felt terrible that he had been angry at you." Tonks continued. "He wrote me a letter with tear stains on it, saying that he probably ruined a beautiful friendship because of a broom. He was devastated and didn't know how to make it up to you. It took him weeks to gather up the courage to apologize for being a jerk as he himself saw it."

"So he was trying to apologize all those times in the library?" Hermione asked. She had seen Harry loitering around in the library whenever she was around but he never talked to her. She had been

very hurt by this and figured that Harry didn't want to be friends anymore.

"Of course, he did." Tonks smiled. "It's just that he was too much of a coward to talk to you. He was afraid you would yell at him or even hex him into the next dimension. When the letter came that the two of you were on good terms again, I could tell how happy he was, having his best friend back."

"I remember how Hermione wrote us a letter saying that she had done something bad." Emma said. "She said that she had lost a friend because she cared too much about him. I didn't understand at the time but now I do. You did the right thing Hermione. I imagine that your friendship with Harry only got stronger because of it."

"I guess that's true." Hermione nodded. "Harry and I never argued like that again after that. So what happened next?" she asked Tonks.

"Well, the next few weeks our letters didn't mention anything too spectacular but one day he wrote me that he was learning the Patronus Charm from Remus Lupin." Tonks told them. "I was shocked because the Patronus Charm is a Charm that even most adults can't do. At that time, the only thing I got was a thick mist and I had been training for years. So when he told me that he managed to do the same thing after a few tries, well I felt a little jealous." She admitted.

"I remember seeing his Patronus at his OWL examination last year." Amelia nodded. "That was quite the achievement for one so young."

"Then you'll be shocked to know that Harry was capable of producing a full corporal Patronus by the end of his third year." Tonks smiled at seeing Amelia's shocked face.

"That's unheard of." Amelia said but what her niece told her next shocked her even more.

"It's true Auntie." Susan said proudly. "Harry taught us how to do the Patronus last year. Most of us who joined the DA are capable of doing the Patronus Charm."

"Of course, none of our Patronus' were anything like Harry's." Hermione said equally proud of her friend. "Harry managed to drive away over a hundred Dementors with his Patronus."

"Surely you're exaggerating." Amelia said, not believing the girls' statements.

"No, they're telling the truth." Tonks told her. "They're getting a bit ahead of the story though. For now let's get back to third year. So during all this time Sirius Black was still at large and was making his way to Hogwarts in search for Harry. Many believed that it was to kill him but that's not the case. Also, Harry wasn't the only one Sirius was looking for."

"Who else was he looking for?" Amelia asked interested. Sirius Black had been one of the few fugitives that had been able to escape Azkaban and managed to evade the Auror forces for such a long time. It had been one of the most irritating cases in her career.

"Peter Pettigrew." Tonks simply said. "I know that he's supposed to be dead. Murdered by Sirius in fact but again that's not what happened. The Wizarding World has the tendency to overlook details because we think that we know everything thanks to magic. In this case however it's the details that made the difference. To explain this I need to go back to the time Harry's parents were at Hogwarts. You see, James Potter, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew were all friends."

"That's common knowledge indeed." Amelia said not understanding why this was important.

"True but what's not known about them is that James, Sirius and Peter became Animagi in order to support their friend Remus." Tonks nodded. "Remus is, as you know, a werewolf and every month he underwent his transformation in solitude in the Shrieking Shack in Hogsmeade. His friends wanted to help him and therefore they started studying to become Animagi. They succeeded in their fifth year."

"Hold on, are you saying that a bunch of kids managed to achieve one of the most difficult magical achievements without any help in only a few years?" Amelia said while Hermione was busy explaining to her parents what an Animagus was.

"That's exactly what I'm saying." Tonks grinned. "It's amazing what one can achieve when there is something that drives you. So the three of them all became Animagi. James' form was a stag, Sirius' was a black grim and Peter's was a rat. Together they managed to control Remus in his transformed state during the nights of the full moon. Coincidentally, it's also thanks to the fact that he was an Animagus that Sirius survived his time in Azkaban without losing his mind. When things got rough on him he transformed and this protected his human mind from the effects of the Dementors, that and the knowledge that he was innocent."

"Incredible, I never thought such a thing was possible." Amelia said visibly impressed.

"Indeed, so when Sirius managed to get a newspaper from Fudge, who was doing an inspection in Azkaban, he immediately recognized a certain rat in a picture." Tonks continued. "The picture showed the Weasley family as they had won a competition in the Daily Prophet."

"Wait a minute, were the Weasleys hiding a murderer in their household?" Amelia said angry. She knew Arthur well enough that he would never do such a thing but one never knew for certain.

"No, they were unaware of the true form of the rat." Tonks quickly explained. "It seemed one of the boys had found the rat in their garden and decided to keep it as a pet. They had no idea the rat was in fact Peter Pettigrew. Sirius however recognized him immediately and it gave him the courage to try and break out of Azkaban to hunt Pettigrew down. Sirius knew the Weasleys quite well and he quickly found out that Pettigrew was at Hogwarts as he was now the pet of the youngest boy, Ron. He tried several times to get to Pettigrew but unfortunately, the rat managed to get away and hide."

"Until the day of Buckbeak's execution." Hermione said remembering what had happened next. She quickly explained who or what Buckbeak was and how it had been punished for attacking Malfoy. Harry, Ron and her had tried to save him but in the end it was inevitable.

"Correct, Sirius managed to scare Peter into the Shrieking Shack and dragged Ron with him so Harry and Hermione would follow him." Tonks said. "They did and when they found Sirius and Ron, he was holding Scabbers, the rat, in his hands. After some explanations and the joining of Remus, the truth came out and Pettigrew appeared pleading for his life. Things were looking up for Harry and Sirius until Remus started transforming into his werewolf form. Pettigrew escaped and Sirius got hurt while trying to restrain Remus enough so the kids could get away. As if that wasn't bad enough the Dementors decided to join the party as well. It was a miracle nobody got kissed."

"But Sirius got caught anyway and was about to be kissed anyway." Hermione added. "That's why Harry and I used my Time-Turner to go back and change things."

"You did what?" Amelia roared furious. "Do you have any idea how dangerous such a device is? Where did you get a Time-Turner anyhow?"

"I received it at the start of the year from Prof. McGonagall." Hermione admitted. "She had been giving it by Prof. Dumbledore so I could attend all my classes. I knew how to use it and I knew about the dangers so I was very careful."

"That idiot, giving such a dangerous item to one so young." Amelia said angry. "What was he thinking?"

"Idiot or not, it was that Time-Turner that saved Sirius and allowed him to escape from Hogwarts." Tonks said while she explained how Harry had saved himself and Sirius from the Dementors with a Patronus that scared away all the Dementors. "I was relieved to hear that he was okay but also angry that he had to face such things. I almost marched into Hogwarts to check up on him after reading his letter."

"Wow, and here I thought my years at Hogwarts were full of adventures." Susan remarked to Hermione. "Being Harry's friend sure comes with a lot of excitement."

"Yeah, amongst other things." Hermione smirked.

"How about we take a little break?" Tonks said. "We've covered quite a bit already but there's still much to do. I'll be right back, if you need anything just call Dobby and he'll help you out."

While Tonks went back upstairs, the other were discussing everything they had heard and here and there Hermione filled in the gaps that Tonks hadn't mentioned or explained a few things to her parents. All of them were already impressed and wondered what else they were going to learn about Harry and Tonks.

### Chapter Three: A trip into the past, part two

When Tonks got back the rest of them were already waiting for her and she chuckled a bit knowing just how curious they were to hear the rest of the story. She sat down and cleared her throat.

"Right, where was I?" Tonks said well aware of where she had stopped.

"Sirius was just freed from Hogwarts." Susan helped her out.

"Ah yes, exactly." Tonks smiled. "Well, seeing as Sirius was still a wanted man Harry needed to return to the Dursleys for the summer. Something that he disliked greatly but at the time there was nothing he could do about it. This time however he refused to let the Dursleys walk all over him like they did before."

"What do you mean?" Emma asked as she had heard a bit about Harry's relatives from Hermione before. "Did they hurt him?"

"No, it was more like they forced him to do all the chores, take away anything that had any relationship with magic, stuff like that." Tonks reassured her. "His relatives hate everything that is not normal and so Harry being a Wizard is a constant reminder that their life isn't normal when he's around. They punish him for it by being petty and spiteful."

"That's horrible." Susan gasped. "Don't they love him, he's family."

"It's pretty obvious that there is no love lost between Harry and his relatives." Tonks admitted. "He never felt at home or loved in their care. Still, they were the only family he had so he had to stay there. There's another reason but that's for later. Anyhow, knowing that Harry would be absolutely miserable, I tried to visit him as often as possible. I had told Harry about my Metamorphmagus powers early in our friendship so it wasn't too hard to visit him in different disguises."

"What's a Metamorphmagus?" Dan wanted to know.

"It's a special ability that allows me to change my appearance at will." Tonks explained and to prove it she transformed into a perfect

replica of Hermione and then Emma. "It's something you have to be born with and it's a rare ability. I believe only one every few decades pops up in England."

"That's amazing." Emma said impressed and shocked. "So you can become anyone you want?"

"Yep but only on the outside." Tonks nodded. "I don't know how to act or behave like the people I transformed into."

"Bet a lot of guys like that ability of yours." Susan said somewhat jealous of such a cool power.

"Of course they do." Tonks snorted. "As soon as they know about it, they ask to increase my cup size or change into some famous model or something. There's a reason why I never dated during my time in Hogwarts."

"Yeah, I can understand how that's a problem." Emma said sadly. "But surely not all of them are like that?"

"No, that's true." Tonks nodded smiling. "Harry, for instance never asked me to transform into anyone. I could visit him disguised as an elderly woman with gray hair and a walking cane and he still talked to me like usual. He's one of the few though. Enough about my powers for now. So I visited Harry several times during that summer and one day he came to me saying he had dreamed about Voldemort coming back."

## FLASHBACK

"I'm serious Harry, are you absolutely sure it was only a dream?" Tonks asked him once more.

"I-I don't know, Tonks." Harry admitted. "'It felt so real but that's impossible isn't it. I mean, in the dream I saw him use the Killing Curse on a Muggle. Also Pettigrew was there as well."

"I don't think it was dream Harry." Tonks said softly. "Think about it, didn't Trelawney say that Pettigrew would find his master? What if he found Voldemort and helped him back into a body?"



"That would be pretty bad." Harry said agreeing that it was a possibility. "So what do we do now? Should I go to the Ministry? Dumbledore?"

"Definitely not the Ministry." Tonks shook her head. "You saw what happened with Sirius. They'll think you're crazy or want to start trouble. Remember, Fudge doesn't like you right now."

"I guess." Harry sighed. "I wrote to Sirius about it, maybe he knows something."

"Maybe but I wouldn't count on it." Tonks said before she tried to change the subject. "So, you're getting out of here huh?"

"Yeah, they're coming to get me tomorrow." Harry smiled. "I'm looking forward to it but I'll miss our meetings. Thanks to you my summer has been a lot better than I anticipated."

"You're welcome Harry." Tonks smiled. "We're friends remember?"

"I know and I consider you one of my best friends." Harry said hugging her.

Tonks was surprised because that was the very first time he had ever initiated a hug on his own. They had hugged lots of times but she always had to take the first step. She grabbed hold of him and happily hugged him back. She didn't say it out loud but she too would miss their secret meetings. She always looked forward to seeing Harry again.

END FLASHBACK

"So that dream was real wasn't it?" Amelia asked.

"We didn't find out till later that it was indeed not a dream but a vision." Tonks nodded. "Unfortunately, we didn't have any proof at that time so we kept quiet about it. Sirius too advised Harry to keep his head down and his eyes wide open. I didn't mention it before but Harry had started exercising and began learning a few spells over the summer that I told him were handy to know."

"You didn't teach him anything from Auror training did you?" Amelia questioned.

"No but later I wish I did." Tonks answered her boss. "If I had taught him some things then maybe everything would be different now. But we can't change the past. Anyway, Harry went to the Weasleys and together with Hermione, they all visited the Quidditch World Tournament."

"Where Death Eaters attacked the crowd." Amelia remembered.

"Yes, the dream combined with the attack was enough to convince both Harry and I that we were right." Tonks nodded. "Something was about to happen and it wouldn't be pretty. Harry promised to work extra hard during classes that year as I told him that everything he learned in Transfiguration, Charms and DADA could be melted into a battle style. He seemed very interested by the possibilities. But of course, something came up."

"The Tri-Wizard Tournament?" Susan asked tentatively.

"Yes, he sent me a letter the very night he was chosen to be the forth Champion. I knew he spoke the truth when he said that he didn't put his name in the Goblet of Fire. There was no way Harry would have wanted to get the attention that came with it on top of being who he was already. Sadly, most people believed he wanted the fame and fortune of being a Champion."

"Like Ron." Hermione sighed.

"Harry was devastated by Ron's unwillingness to stand by him." Tonks explained nodding. "He asked me how someone could ignore a friendship of three years like that. I didn't really know what to say but I told him that Ron would understand his error soon enough and that he would come back asking for forgiveness. Later Harry told me that he didn't really blame Ron for being jealous. He understood that Ron wanted to distinguish himself from his brothers and sister. Ron wanted to show the world that he wasn't just another Weasley and that he too could be great."

"I'm sorry Hermione, I know he's your friend but I don't think Ron would have survived the first task if he was a Champion." Susan said to Hermione.

"Don't worry, I feel exactly the same way." Hermione smiled. "Ron is a great friend and while he's far from stupid, he's also lazy and careless. He could be a great Wizard but he needs to mature a bit more. He's just too focused on what he doesn't have, instead on focusing what he does have. He loves his family but sometime he takes them for granted."

"And to Harry that's something he doesn't understand." Tonks continued. "I'm sure you heard him say it already but Harry would give his entire vault and all the fame for one moment with his parents. He dreams of hugging his mum and to be hugged by her. He wants his dad to pat him on the shoulder and to say he did a good job. Sadly, that will never happen. Anyway, being the forth Champion made a real mess of things and almost destroyed my nerves." She chuckled.

"Your nerves? What about mine?" Hermione snorted. "You didn't seen him go up against that dragon. My heart nearly stopped when it yanked off its chains and chased Harry."

"On the contrary, I was there." Tonks said before adding another line to the board much to Hermione displeasure. "You know the deal Hermione. Be glad I overlooked it a few times already. As I was saying, I was at Hogwarts for all three tasks. I mean, how could I not be? My best friend was facing a Hungarian Horntail for Merlin's sake. Of course I was disguised as a inconspicuous student sitting at the far side but I was there and Harry knew it. I took me every ounce of self-control not to race to the tent and go see him." She then turned to Hermione. "Seeing you hug him after the task was the first time I felt a bit jealous of you."

"You were jealous of me?" Hermione asked. "But why?"

"Come on baby girl, it's pretty obvious don't you think so?" Dan said to his daughter. "Tonks here was falling for Harry."

"You were what?" Hermione shrieked.

"Is it so surprising?" Tonks said gently. "Harry and I spent so much time together and wrote letters almost daily. Be assured I didn't act upon my feelings until much later but they were there. It was still small but nonetheless I knew what it was. To be honest, I was mortified at first. I had finally found my best friend and there I was,

screwing it up by falling in love with him. So, I decided to ignore my feelings. Harry was still too young for a relationship though he told me later that he too had some kind of feelings for me. But like me, he was afraid of destroying our friendship by acting upon them. So the both of us continued to be friends for the time being."

"Am I to believe that you and Mr. Potter are an item at this moment?" Amelia asked while staring at Tonks.

"Yes Ma'am." Tonks admitted. "But again, I assure you that nothing happened until much later. As for the physical aspect of a relationship, we waited until Harry reached the age of consent. I'm not ashamed that Harry and I are together nor do I regret it. I know some people will have issues with us being together but we don't care. The only feelings I worry about are Hermione's feelings."

"My feelings?" Hermione said. "Why do my feelings matter?"

"Don't get me wrong but I always suspected that you had feelings for Harry beyond friendship." Tonks said carefully. "I never told Harry about it but I felt that you might like Harry."

"What? No, I love Harry but I'm not in love with him." Hermione quickly said. "Harry's my best friend and I would give my life for him if the situation called for it but that's it."

"So you don't have a problem with us being together?" Tonks asked relieved.

"Well, I would have to think about it." Hermione admitted. "But if you make Harry happy then I'm all for it. His happiness is what matters and you're my friend too so I guess I don't have a problem with the two of you being together."

"Thank you Hermione, you have no idea how much that means to me." Tonks said moving over to Hermione, giving the girl a hug.

"Well, maybe you could cancel the ban on the library for me?" Hermione tried.

"Nice try but no." Tonks laughed sitting down again.

"Worth a shot." Hermione shrugged.

"We've gotten off track a bit." Tonks said. "So I'll skip a bit until the third task. As you all know, Harry had done very well during the first two tasks of the Tournament and while I was immensely proud of him, I was worried about the third task. The maze was a daunting task and I had a bad feeling about it. Harry too, admitted in his letters that he didn't look forward to the final task. So once more I disguised myself as a student and watched as he and Cedric Diggory vanished when they grabbed the Cup."

"Then what happened?" Emma asked softly.

"Harry and Cedric appeared in a graveyard and before they could do anything Cedric got killed by Peter Pettigrew." Tonks told them. "Harry was stunned and tortured until his blood was used to revive Voldemort. Harry later told me that he had never been more scared in his entire life. Voldemort called his Death Eaters to him and Harry recognized several of them."

"Who did he see?" Amelia asked interested.

"Lucius Malfoy amongst others." Tonks told her. "I believe Nott and Rockwood were there as well."

"Goddammit, why wasn't I told of this?" Amelia shouted.

"Harry told everything to Dumbledore and Fudge." Tonks sighed. "However Fudge didn't believe Harry and labeled him an attention-seeking brat and a liar. I told you that you would curse the man several more times today. There's more to come though."

"That incompetent fool." Amelia roared.

"Calm down Auntie and let Tonks tell the story." Susan said amazed at what she was hearing.

"Thank you Susan." Tonks smiled. "Anyway, Harry and Voldemort dueled and somehow Harry managed to get away with Cedric's body. After everything calmed down and the fake Moody was discovered Harry was taken to Poppy so she could heal him. When everyone left, I sneaked into the ward and sat down next to Harry. He was asleep thanks to the potions Poppy had given him so he

didn't hear or saw me but I broke down in tears hugging him closely. By then I realized my feelings for Harry were more than I had dared to admit. I knew I had almost lost him."

## FLASHBACK

Tonks entered the ward and slipped into the curtain that surrounded Harry's bed. Her eyes immediately went to his face and she saw that he was sleeping peacefully. Seeing the potion bottle next to his bed, she realized that he must have taken a Dreamless Sleeping Potion. That meant that he wouldn't wake up until morning. Silently she sat down in the chair next to the bed and ran her hand through Harry's hair. Tears sprang into her eyes and ran down her cheeks.

"Oh Harry, you have to stop making me cry." Tonks said softly. "Do you have any idea how worried I was? I thought my heart stopped when you disappeared after taking the cup. I was beside myself with worry. I was so scared I wouldn't see you again."

She then crawled halfway into the bed with Harry and put her head on his shoulder, her tears soaking his shirt. She stayed like that a few minutes just enjoying the feeling of being next to him.

"I can't stay much longer." Tonks said to him. "Poppy might come in to check on you in a few minutes. I just wanted to see you and tell you that I love you." She then softly pressed her lips to his. "I know we can't be together just yet but I promise you that soon I'll tell you these words when you can hear them. Sleep well my love." She turned away and walked out of the infirmary without anyone noticing.

## END FLASHBACK

"Oh my god that's so romantic." Emma said softly. "See that? Why don't you do things like that?" she asked Dan.

"Euh, I- well- I...." Dan stuttered.

"Men!" Emma exclaimed making everyone laugh at Dan's uncomfortable situation.

"So what happened next?" Susan said impatiently. This had to be the best story she had ever heard and she waiting to find out what

happened next. She never knew that things like that had happened to Harry and she felt bad for him. He didn't deserve all this.

"Well, Harry was released out of the infirmary several days later, just before the end of year feast." Tonks said. "He was sad and depressed that Cedric had died and he felt responsible. He offered to take the Cup together and so he figured that he caused Cedric's death. It took me quite a while to make him understand that it wasn't his fault. Then the summer began and he was back at Privet Drive with his relatives."

"That doesn't sound good at all." Dan remarked.

"It wasn't." Tonks sighed. "His relatives didn't care about him or why he was sad and angry. They only cared about the fact that he was disrupting their so called perfect, normal life again. Harry spent most of his time holed up in room brooding and angry. It was only when I visited him that he cheered up. Unfortunately, visiting him became much harder as now the Order of the Phoenix was guarding him. So I did the only thing I could do, I joined the Order of the Phoenix so I could get close to him."

"So you are a member of Dumbledore's group." Amelia said her suspicions now confirmed.

"Yes I am." Tonks nodded. "Not because I stand behind Dumbledore but because it was the only way to be close to Harry. I knew Dumbledore had forbidden Hermione and Ron to send letters to Harry so I did what I could to help my friend and the man I love. Also the fact that the Ministry was ignoring Harry's warning gave me the impression that the only way to fight Voldemort was to join the Order. Harry was very angry in the beginning when he didn't receive so much as one letter from his friends. He thought they abandoned him or something. Of course once I explained it to him, he was still angry but he knew they didn't have choice."

"I wanted to, I swear." Hermione said almost crying. "But Prof. Dumbledore told us not to and he monitored everything. Even Mrs. Weasley kept us busy with all that cleaning. I tried to argue with them but neither of them listened. I told them that Harry wouldn't like being cut off from the world."

"And you were right." Tonks smiled at the girl. "Don't worry Hermione; he doesn't blame you for it. If he seemed mad at you, it was because he was angry at the world and scared. Harry may seem very courageous at times but he still gets scared like everyone else. So when the time came to bring him to the Headquarters of the Order, both Harry and I were very excited. It meant that we would see each other more often. We still agreed to pretend not to know each other as we weren't ready to give up our secret friendship just yet."

"Why not? I mean, it's not like you and Harry were together at that time." Emma asked her.

"There was no real reason for it." Tonks admitted. "Call it some childish revenge on everyone who kept secrets from Harry. Or maybe it was because we didn't want to share our friendship with anyone else, I don't know. It did however prove to be much harder to keep it a secret in that house. Like you said Hermione, Harry was monitored almost every time of the day. If it wasn't Molly, it was someone else. I can tell you that I came very close to hexing Molly with all her meddling."

## FLASHBACK

Tonks sneaked into Harry's room at around midnight knowing that he would still be awake. She hadn't been able to talk to him in two days thanks to Molly Weasley always butting in. The woman was infuriating and Tonks had been close to hexing her several times already.

The woman was on a mission to keep Harry and his friends out of the loop and busy doing mindless cleaning throughout the house. Everywhere where Harry was, she was there to make sure none of the adults said anything to Harry. This made it very hard for Tonks to speak with Harry and that was why they had agreed to meet up at night when everyone was asleep. Harry had given her his Invisibility Cloak so she could sneak around without being seen.

"About time you got here." Harry smirked.

"Quiet you." Tonks glared. "I thought Sirius and Remus would spend the night drinking downstairs. Make lots of noise for me in the morning okay?"



"You can count on me." Harry laughed. Sirius was a good drinker and a happy drunk but he was very bad with hangovers, something Harry had learned quite early during his stay here.

"So how are you feeling?" Tonks said sitting down next to Harry.

"Okay, I guess." Harry shrugged. "I would be better if I didn't have to worry about that hearing in week."

"I'm sure you'll be okay. I mean, Dumbledore himself is going to represent you." Tonks said trying to make him feel better.

"Thank Merlin for small miracles." Harry agreed. "Still, I'm a bit worried. The Daily Prophet isn't helping things with the slander they're printing about me."

"Ignore that. The only ones that believe that are fools that aren't worth your time." Tonks said hotly. "We know the truth and it's time for us to get ready. I brought you a few books with advanced spells. Keep them secret for now. Study the theory now and once you're at Hogwarts be sure to practice them."

"Thanks Tonks, you're the best." Harry said hugging her closely. Tonks happily hugged him back and to her surprise the hug lasted longer than usual but she kept quiet. For now that was all that she could do so she enjoyed it.

"No worries." Tonks said when he broke the hug. "Now you have something to do instead of cleaning all the time."

"Don't remind me." Harry said frustrated. "I feel like Mrs. Weasley is growing out the back of my neck. She's constantly following me and keeping me away from Sirius. Bloody irritating, that's what it is."

"Yeah, she's constantly raving about how Sirius is a bad influence on you and such rubbish." Tonks nodded. "She's even started to keep other adults away from you and your friends as well. I mean, just this morning I tried to come up to say hello and she practically dragged me back downstairs saying you were too busy to be disturbed."

"Too busy?" Harry snorted. "I've been polishing doorknobs for crying out loud."

"Sirius is mighty pissed at her as well." Tonks laughed. "He even tried to talk Remus into pulling a prank on her. Remus refused though saying that it would only make things worse."

"Shame but Moony is probably right." Harry said sadly. "It's just so boring. I mean, there's a whole library with awesome books that we could read but she doesn't allow us up there. Hermione's been drooling every time we walk past the door."

"That must be pure torture to the poor girl." Tonks giggled a bit. "The way she loves books, knowing there's a whole library just a door away and not being allowed to enter."

"Yeah, she was pretty upset by it." Harry laughed a bit as well. "So how are things with you?"

"I'm fine. A bit tired though, I'm working double shifts at the moment." Tonks admitted. "But I don't mind, at least now we can see each other more often."

"Yeah." Harry simply said while taking her hand in his.

Tonks' eyes opened wide in shock at Harry's bold move but she didn't let go. She simply held his hand as they sat in a comfortable silence. Soon enough though she had to leave as she still needed to get some sleep. She wished she could kiss him goodnight but she figured that would be pushing things so she simply hugged him like she always did before she left.

END FLASHBACK

"Soon after that it was time to leave for Hogwarts." Tonks said. "Somehow, I had managed not to hex Molly and keep meeting Harry a few more times. However, we both dreaded the day he had to leave for Hogwarts."

"Now that you mention it, Harry did seem a bit down when we left." Hermione said connecting the dots. "His feelings for you had started to change as well."

"I believe so." Tonks smiled brightly. "He told me afterwards that he understood how he felt during the days after the Third Task. It explains why he dared grab my hand and hug me a lot more than he usually did."

"So when did you actually get together?" Emma wanted to know.

"Not for a while yet." Tonks smiled mysteriously. "Anyway like we did before, we exchanged letters almost daily but not through Hedwig. Hedwig had gotten hurt when someone tried to take a letter from her so we deemed that it wasn't safe anymore. Hedwig didn't like it but we explained to her that she was too important and that she couldn't get hurt. She has quite the temper and ego."

"Hedwig is an amazing owl." Hermione agreed with Tonks. "I've never seen an owl act like her. She's fiercely protective of Harry and sometimes I could swear they can communicate with each other."

"I suspect the same thing." Tonks snorted. "One time I caught Harry talking to her. He was actually apologizing to her for not having enough confidence in her abilities. It was quite the sight. Anyhow, since using Hedwig was out of the question we relied on a new partner. A partner that only Harry could call upon."

"Who?" Hermione wanted to know.

"Why, Dobby of course." Tonks grinned before she looked at Hermione. "Before you get your knickers in a twist, Dobby was paid for every letter he delivered and also for every time he helps us. Which reminds me, Dobby?"

"Harry Potter's Tonksie called for Dobby?" The excited house-elf said.

"Yes Dobby, here's your pay for helping out today." Tonks smiled at the elf and handed him several silver coins.

"Harry Potter and his Tonksie are too generous." Dobby exclaimed loudly. "Dobby cannot take more than one coin."

"Remember our deal, Dobby." Tonks warned him. "Harry and I decide how much you get paid for each job. You did a great job today so you should be paid a bit more than usual."

"Dobby is so happy." Dobby said before he vanished.

"I never thought I'd see the day that a house-elf would accept to be paid." Amelia said amazed.

"Dobby is not like any other elf." Tonks grinned. "Harry freed him from Lucius Malfoy in his second year so he's very grateful to Harry. He likes being free and in charge of himself even though we suspect he wants to be bonded to Harry."

"Tobby would rather die than be free or paid." Susan remarked.

"Like I said, Dobby is unique." Tonks continued. "So with Dobby delivering our letters, I quickly learned that Dolores Umbridge was the new DADA professor."

"Umbridge? Is that really her name?" Dan stifled a laugh.

"No, it's Umbridge but I call her that because she's one." Tonks said angry. "A bitch, I mean. She had the gall to torture students with a bloodquill."

"She didn't?" Amelia roared. "That's a Dark Item and its use is punishable by law."

"What's a bloodquill?" Susan asked though she didn't like the sound of it.

"It looks like a normal quill but instead of using ink to write, it uses the writer's blood." Hermione explained. "It's considered torture to make people write with it. Harry was forced to write with it during his detentions with that foul woman."

"Why didn't anyone stop that?" Amelia asked. "Surely, the teachers were aware that this was happening?"

"Harry went to see McGonagall but she told him to keep his head down." Tonks explained. "In all fairness Harry didn't tell her what Umbridge made him do. He didn't want to cause any more trouble and didn't want to give Umbridge the satisfaction. Still, Harry wasn't the only one she forced to write with that quill so maybe they did know

but couldn't do anything about it. You know as well as I do that Fudge supported her all the way."

"Still, she should have been arrested." Amelia said angry. The first chance she got, Dolores Umbridge would be apprehended and brought to her for questioning. "I'm not letting her get away with this. Torturing innocent children. Who does she think she is? Would Mr. Potter be willing to testify against her?"

"I'm afraid it won't do any good." Tonks sighed. "There's no proof of Harry ever using that quill."

"What? But what about the scars on the back of his hand?" Hermione asked. "The scars read 'I will not tell lies' and they're clearly visible."

"The scars are gone." Tonks simply said.

"Huh? How is that possible?" Hermione wanted to know.

"Ah that's for later in the story." Tonks said smiling. "How about another break, we've been talking almost two hours now. I don't know about you girls but I could use the loo and stretch my legs a bit."

## Chapter Four: A trip into the past, part three

After everyone had used the bathroom and stretched their legs a bit, they joined back and Tonks continued her story.

"So Umbitch had started ruling the school with the Educational Degree's passed by the Ministry. Harry was being targeted by Umbitch and had trouble resisting her taunting. It seemed she was out to get him and everyone associated with Dumbledore. Not to mention she was getting on his nerves with her ridiculous DADA lessons, even if it gave him the time to read up on those advanced spells I gave him."

"I'm so kicking his butt for keeping those spells from me." Hermione huffed making everyone laugh at her expense.

"Then a marvelous thing happened." Tonks smiled at the bushy-haired girl. "Hermione came up with the idea for Harry to teach other students some spells and magic that he knew. While he wasn't enthusiastic about it in the beginning, he warmed up after I told him it was a great idea. It would give him something to do and let him learn new things that he might need to know as well. He actually enjoyed 'Dumbledore's Army'." Here she winked at Hermione and Susan who smiled proudly.

"Dumbledore's Army?" Amelia asked them. "Kind of a bold name, don't you think?"

"It was only to annoy Umbitch." Susan smirked at using the name Tonks had given Umbridge. "We knew she feared that Prof. Dumbledore was training students as his own personal soldiers in order to overthrow the Ministry."

"Idiots." Amelia snorted. "As if a few kids could defeat trained Aurors and adults."

"Don't be so sure." Tonks said shaking her head. "If you would remember the incident at the Department of Mysteries only a few weeks ago. Harry and his friends held their own against some of the worst Death Eaters out there. Not many Aurors would have been able to do the same thing."

"I admit it was very impressive to say the least." Amelia agreed with Tonks.

"Anyhow, the DA was a great success and everyone was learning loads. Harry often sneaked out of his bed at night and spent several hours practicing the spells he learned from the books I gave him. He hadn't mastered any of them yet but he was getting there. Then things took a turn for the worst."

"Harry's lifetime ban in Quidditch." Hermione guessed.

"Right you are Hermione." Tonks said. "The ultimate punishment for Harry. He blamed himself for losing control over his emotions but I don't blame him. Malfoy had insulted his parents one too many times and he snapped. He later admitted that it was almost worth it getting banned from playing Quidditch. Still, his only hobby had been taken away from him and he was stressed enough as it was. Thankfully he had the DA to occupy his mind."

"I never knew he was so excited about it." Hermione said stunned. "It took me weeks to convince him and even then it was just barely."

"I know." Tonks laughed. "He hated it at first but only because you wanted him to lead everyone. I already told you that Harry doesn't like being in the spotlight. You of all people should know that. But the teaching and the learning he absolutely loved. It gave him respite from everything else that had been going on. The slander in the Daily Prophet had picked up and Umbridge was making his life difficult. I could tell from what he told me in our letters that he was very grateful for your idea. Anyway, dear Dolores was getting more and more power from Fudge and already Trelawney was on probation so when she inspected Hagrid, Harry was furious at seeing how she treated him just because he was half-giant."

"Didn't help Hagrid was too stubborn to listen to my warnings." Hermione said under her breath.

"There was that as well." Tonks agreed. "With everything that was going on Harry had trouble sleeping and he mentioned how he kept dreaming of long corridors and locked doors. We tried to figure out what his dreams meant but for the life of us we couldn't find anything. Then Cho Chang, sneaky little bint that she is, kissed him."

"Oh yeah, I almost forgot about that." Hermione said. "How did you feel about that?"

"How do you think I felt, Hermione?" Tonks said. "I'm sitting at home, hundreds of miles from the man I love and there's some girl kissing him. Let me tell you, I didn't like it one bit. I was afraid to lose him to her, even though I knew Harry's crush on her had passed for the most part."

"I'm sorry Tonks, I didn't mean to laugh at you or your feelings." Hermione quickly said feeling bad. "It's just that Harry came back looking really confused and scared. He told me she cornered him after the DA meeting and kissed him while bawling her eyes out. He didn't initiate anything."

"I know now but at the moment I felt like my heart was close to shattering in a million pieces." Tonks said softly. "The thought of losing Harry to her was unbearable and I decided that once I saw him during Christmas break I would tell him how I felt. I couldn't wait any longer. But of course, things didn't really work out. At least not completely."

"What happened?" Susan asked her.

"Arthur Weasley got attacked while working for the Order." Tonks told them. "Voldemort's pet snake sneaked up on him and bit him, severely wounding him. The really weird part is that Harry managed to see everything from the snake's perspective. He warned Prof. McGonagall, who took him to Dumbledore, who made sure Arthur was found in time to save him. He still spent a fair bit of time in St. Mungo's for treatment."

"How did Mr. Potter see what happened?" Amelia said interested. "I never heard of such a thing."

"Neither have we." Tonks admitted sadly. "It made Harry really uncomfortable and he feared that he was losing his mind or being possessed by Voldemort. It took a very drastic measure to get him out of his flunk."

"What measure was that?" Dan said already having a good idea.

"Quite simple actually." Tonks smiled. "I kissed him."



## FLASHBACK

Harry was sitting in Buckbeak's room, hiding from everyone. He was sure he was losing his mind, even those in the Order were looking at him funny. There had been talk that he might be possessed by Voldemort or something like that. It was a preposterous idea but somehow the more he thought about, the more likely it seemed to get.

The feeling of anger and hatred he had felt when he was in the Headmaster's presence was unlike anything he had felt before. It wasn't like how he disliked his relatives and Harry was pretty sure he hated them. This however was beyond that. It was pure and utter hatred. Enough that he had felt compelled to attack the aged wizard right there and then. It was only the portkey activating that stopped him from attacking. That was why he was isolating himself right now. He had absolutely hated the feeling and wanted to make sure that he didn't attack anyone. His friends had tried to talk to him but he refused to see them.

Suddenly the door slammed open almost giving him a heart attack in the process. Even Buckbeak had been frightened. In the doorway stood his best friend and if he dared admit it the woman he loved. Nymphadora Tonks was absolutely the most wonderful person he knew. He realized he liked her as more than just his best friend in the past summer and while he was sure she didn't return his feelings he often dreamed of how it would be if she did.

"Hi Tonks, what are you doing here?" Harry said actually allowing a small smile to appear on his face.

"Never mind that right now." Tonks said walking up to him before she grabbed his face and pressed her lips to his.

Harry for his part was shocked at what was happening. Tonks was kissing him. He could feel her soft lips pressing against his, while her hands were roaming through his hair. Instinctively he placed his hand on her hips and pulled her closer. She didn't resist and eagerly continued the kiss. He felt her tongue running on his lower lip, asking for access and who was he to deny her? Soon their tongues were battling for domination until they could no longer hold their

breaths. When they broke apart neither of them let go of the other but leaned their foreheads against each other.

"Wow." Harry said after taking a deep breath. "That's was amazing."

"Yeah, it was." Tonks smiled at him. "I've wanted to do that for quite a while now."

"Really?" Harry asked surprised. "How long?"

"I knew I loved you when I saw you lying in the hospital wing after the Third task." Tonks admitted while giving him a small peck on the lips. "I thought I lost you without having the chance to tell you how I felt."

"Why didn't you tell me then?" Harry said keeping her close.

"I was afraid and you were still so young." Tonks admitted. "I wanted to wait until you got a bit older."

"I'm not that much older now." Harry frowned at her explanation. "Why kiss me now?"

"Because I feared I might lose you to some other girl." Tonks sighed. "That and I couldn't wait any longer. It was driving me crazy all summer long. You have no idea how much I had to restrain myself at times. With Molly keeping me away from you, we barely saw each other at all last summer. It was maddening, let me tell you."

"Another girl? You mean Cho right?" Harry said softly. "You know she nothing compared to you, don't you? I admit I had a crush on her for a while but that's over. I mean, I almost freaked when she kissed me and even then, the kiss you and I had was a thousand times better."

"Only a thousand times?" Tonks said playfully. "I'm sure we could do better than that."

"I agree." Harry said before he kissed her. This time it was more relaxed and more loving. The first time had a hungry feeling to it but now it was gently and caring. It lasted until both of them were out of air and even then they were reluctant to break the kiss. "So what happens next?" Harry said after catching his breath.

"I don't know but I know this. I love you Harry Potter." Tonks said almost shocked at her own words. "You're my best friend, my confidant and my inspiration. I don't know why I refused to see it until now but I can clearly see it now. I'm completely and utterly head over heels for you and I know we can make this work if you want it."

"If I want it?" Harry smiled. "Tonks, I know people think I'm a complete dunderhead sometimes but even I can tell that what I feel for you is love. I was scared that you wouldn't return my feelings but I see that fear was unnecessary. If you'll have me then I'm yours for as long as you want me."

"Good then I want you to be mine." Tonks smiled kissing him again on the lips. "And I want to be yours."

"It's a deal." Harry grinned at her.

END FLASHBACK

"That was the first time Harry and I truly kissed." Tonks said smiling at the memory. "We stayed up there for several more hours. We talked about us, about how he felt when he was in the presence of Dumbledore and how he feared to be possessed by Voldemort and hurt his friends and family."

"Wait a minute." Hermione interrupted wincing as another line was drawn on the board. "I came to see Harry upstairs and I didn't see you there."

"You're forgetting about Harry's Cloak." Tonks explained. "I used a 'Perimeter Charm' halfway up the stairs to alert me when someone was coming. When you passed it, I quickly grabbed the cloak and hid in the corner of the room behind Buckbeak. I must say I was quite disappointed that you dragged Harry away from me."

"Sorry." Hermione said sheepishly. "I just wanted to help Harry, you know?"

"Don't worry about it." Tonks smiled at the girl. "So despite Arthur getting attacked, Harry and I had a great holiday. We met up in secret and continued to explore our newfound relationship. Harry

instantly said that he wanted to take things slow and I whole-heartily agreed. We knew things would be difficult with him being at Hogwarts and me being an Auror but we vowed to make things work."

"That must have been difficult." Emma remarked. "I mean, you're a grown woman and I'm sure you must have wanted more than snogging Harry at times."

"I admit it wasn't easy." Tonks nodded with a slight blush on her face. "I really wanted Harry both psychically as physically but at the time it was impossible. We had a hard time hiding our feelings for each other as it was. Sometimes I suspected Sirius knew what was going on but he never said anything to us. Not to mention Molly, she was watching us like a hawk."

"How could I have missed all of this?" Hermione said a bit angry at herself for not seeing everything that was going on around her.

"Don't blame yourself." Tonks smiled. "We fooled everyone, not just you. Even Snape, who had to give Occlumency lessons to Harry never found out about us."

"Occlumency? Why did Mr. Potter need to learn such an art?" Amelia said trying to ignore how her youngest Auror was in a relationship with a sixteen year old boy.

"Dumbledore deemed it necessary as he feared that Voldemort was trying to influence Harry." Tonks explained. "Of course, he didn't tell Harry anything about this and told him that it would help him with the visions he had been having. Anyway, it was doomed to fail from the start as Harry and Snape hate each other."

"I heard about that." Susan said. "Why do they hate each other so much?"

"Various reasons I'm afraid." Tonks said. "To Snape, Harry's a constant reminder of his childhood nemesis. James, Sirius and Remus were popular, funny, and smart and used to get away with almost anything. Snape however was a Slytherin and so was hated for his house. He was often the victim of pranks done by James and Sirius."

"So basically they were a group of bullies?" Dan frowned.

"I know it might seem that way and sometimes they did take things a bit too far." Tonks nodded. "But they often retaliated against Slytherins who hurt other students. It were the days that Voldemort had started making his appearance and those in Slytherin quickly followed his lead and started targeting Muggle-borns and other non-pureblooded witches and wizards. But yes, sometimes they crossed the line. Anyhow, we have other reasons to suspect that Snape had feelings for Lily but she never returned them and so he hated James for stealing her from him."

"Prof. Snape was in love with Harry's mother?" Susan asked shocked. "I can't see how a man like him could love anyone. He's bitter and mean to everyone."

"Love is a great but scary thing, Susan." Amelia said wisely. "Countries have gone to war over it and people killed and hurt others in its name. It's not hard to lose yourself in it and when it's ripped away from you, it does strange things to a person."

"So Harry reminds Snape of his parents and how he was treated by them." Emma said understanding the point Tonks was trying to make. "Still it's no reason to treat a young boy like that because of his parents."

"He needed someone to blame." Tonks shrugged. "First it was James and now it's Harry. That's all there's to it. Snape was brutal in his teachings and Harry had troubling grasping the foundations of Occlumency. It didn't help that Snape only told him to clear his mind and then attacked his mind. Every time Harry did make progress between lessons, Snape destroyed it the following class. It was a disaster and instead of strengthening Harry's mind, it only made it weaker."

"Making him more open to You-Know-Who." Amelia mused loudly.

"Exactly." Tonks nodded. "Then Harry saw a memory of Snape in his Pensive and Snape was furious, refusing to teach Harry anything else. It did Harry some good as he managed to build up some shields but they were nothing compared to what they could have been if he had been properly taught from the beginning. The rest of

the school year went fairly quick and soon it was time for OWL's. Got your results already?" She asked Susan and Hermione.

"No not yet." Hermione said angry. "They should arrive any day now."

"I'm sure you did well." Tonks smiled at the girl. "Harry has no doubt you aced everything. How about you Susan?"

"I'm sure I did fairly well on the courses that matter." Susan nodded confident. "I didn't put much effort in Divination and History of Magic however. I'm not planning on taken those classes next year anyway so. I'm sure I'll get an Acceptable at the very least, though."

"That's good." Tonks said impressed. "Harry too feels comfortable that he did fairly well on most courses. Except Astronomy, because Hagrid and McGonagall got attacked by the Ministry, and History of Magic, where he suffered from another vision."

"The vision of Sirius being tortured by Voldemort." Hermione added.

"Correct again." Tonks nodded. "In the vision he saw that somehow Voldemort managed to get to Sirius and was torturing him deep in the Department of Mysteries. Harry was understandably troubled and was scared of losing his Godfather again. He did realize however that he couldn't just leave Hogwarts and barge into the Ministry in search for him. So he tried to contact us but didn't get any of us to confirm if it was trap yes or no. Then Dolores Umbridge caught you guys making him lose precious time."

"She was so sure we were hiding a super weapon to defeat the Ministry." Hermione sighed. "She wouldn't believe us when we said that there was no such thing. She was going to use the Cruciatus Curse on Harry so I lied about the weapon being in the Dark Forest."

"She actually used the Cruciatus Curse on Harry?" Amelia said fuming mad.

"No, but I could tell she was going to so I lied and she then forced Harry and I to take her to the weapon." Hermione explained. "Together we led her through the forest hoping to find a way to get rid of her and escape. It worked in way. We were stopped by a few

Centaurs as we were trespassing on their lands. Of course, Umbridge thought it wise to insult them causing them to attack her. Luckily Harry and I got away."

"It was brilliant." Tonks grinned. "I heard rumors Umbitch had to be taken to St-Mungo's for memory modification and she's still taking potions to heal the damage they done to her. Don't feel bad about it Hermione, she deserved what she got."

"I don't feel bad actually." Hermione said. "If anything, I feel bad for the Centaurs that had to put up with her. She's really unpleasant to be around."

"Then Harry and the rest travelled to the Ministry and went in search for Sirius." Tonks said. "Only to find Malfoy and several other Death Eaters. The worst case scenario had come true, it was a trap and none of them were ready to face such opponents. Still, they all did brilliantly. They managed to hold them off long enough for help to arrive but not before Hermione had gotten seriously hurt, Ron had been attacked by a brain, Ginny and Luna both out of the fight. Only Harry and Neville were still standing when reinforcements arrived. Things went downhill from there. I faced off my aunt Bellatrix and got my butt handed to me and if it wasn't for Sirius engaging her, she would have killed me. Sirius however, fooled around too much and got himself blasted through the Veil of Death." Here Tonks actually had some tears running down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry Tonks." Hermione said sadly as she too remembered Sirius fondly.

"If only he had been fighting for real instead of goofing off." Tonks said angry. "He was just too happy to get out of that damn house. It was the first time in over a year he had been allowed out of the house so of course he was giddy at the thought even though it was a battle. Harry, seeing Sirius killed by Bellatrix, went in a rage and followed her to avenge Sirius. He didn't stand a chance against her but then Dumbledore and Voldemort arrived at the scene. Bellatrix fled instantly while Harry watched as Dumbledore and Voldemort battled each other. In the end Voldemort tried to possess Harry and force him to attack his friends."

"I gather that didn't happen." Amelia asked Tonks.

"Of course not. Harry would never hurt those he loves." Tonks smiled. "He fought back and eventually drove Voldemort out of his head. Apparently, feelings of love and caring aren't Voldemort's cup of tea. The rest you know, Fudge and his cronies arrived just to see Voldemort flee the scene, proving once and for all that what Harry had been saying was true. Even then Fudge pleaded to Dumbledore to tell him it wasn't true."

"Such a disgrace." Amelia shook her head. "If only he had listened we wouldn't be here right now."

"Fudge and the Ministry had plenty of time and ways to find out the truth about Voldemort but they preferred to stick their heads in the sand and blame a young man instead." Tonks said angry. "Because of this we're ill prepared to defend ourselves, let alone fight a war."

"I'm aware of that Tonks." Amelia sighed ashamed of how the Ministry had dealt with the situation. "I'll properly apologize for this to Mr. Potter."

"Don't bother, Harry doesn't blame you." Tonks smiled at her boss. "He knows things would have been different if only Fudge wasn't minister. Still, the damage is done and it will take a lot of effort to get things right in order to survive Voldemort and his Death Eaters. That's why Harry and I started preparing for war."

"War? You really think it will come to that?" Emma asked scared for her daughter's safety.

"I'm sure of it." Tonks nodded. "It's only a matter of time before Voldemort feels secure enough to actually launch the attack. Right now he still preparing and he's afraid of Dumbledore right now. That's what holding him back but it will only be that way for so long. Once he gathers the necessary manpower he's sure to start his war against the Magical World."

"So what can we do against him? I mean, from what I gather he's terribly strong and has many to aid his cause." Dan asked them.

"While it's true that Voldemort had the advantage right now, we're not totally without power either." Tonks said. "Harry and I have been preparing for war as well. The fact that we're meeting in this apartment building is a testament of that. We've been trying to



secure as much resources as possible. It wasn't easy and some of the things we did aren't totally on the level either."

"What do you mean?" Hermione said narrowing her eyes not noticing Amelia doing the same thing.

"War costs money, Hermione." Tonks explained. "While Harry may have some in his vault, it isn't nearly enough to sponsor us. So we went in search for other money. We figured that since fighting Voldemort and his Death Eaters is also protecting the Muggle World we'd take some of their resources."

"But Muggle money is useless in the Wizarding World." Dan said loudly. "We have to exchange money each year in order to pay for Hermione's tuition and books. Luckily the Goblins at Gringotts exchange it otherwise we'd be stuck."

"While you are correct about the Muggle money Dan, I'm talking about gold." Tonks said. "You see, gold is the one weakness Goblins have. They crave for it and they desire to have all of it. In fact, until several centuries ago the Goblin race was the only one to mine for it everywhere possible. But then the human race found gold as well and they too desired it. Unfortunately for the Goblins, the humans were much more efficient at mining and had greater numbers to mine. Goblins don't like it that Muggles have so much gold in their hands and they want it back."

"I had no idea." Hermione said surprised.

"But aren't Galleons made out of gold?" Susan asked.

"No, that's what they want us to think." Amelia agreed with Tonks. "A Galleon is nothing more than a piece of metal known as Fools Gold."

"Fool's Gold? Never heard of it." Susan wondered.

"Fool's Gold is a gold colored mineral also known as Iron Pyrite." Hermione explained. "It looks exactly like gold but compared to gold it's totally worthless. Many miners thought they found gold only to hear it wasn't. Many were fooled by its appearance and were thought of as fools for thinking they were rich. Hence the name Fool's gold."

"Exactly. It takes a talented eye to see the difference but it's there." Tonks smiled at Hermione. "Nowadays, mining for gold is something done by major corporations. But gold is still one of the most precious metals around and the Goblins want it all for themselves."

"That's a bit unrealistic don't you think?" Emma remarked. "I mean, who knows how much gold there is in the world."

"Of course but that doesn't stop them from trying." Tonks said to Emma who nodded. "They figured that whatever amount they can gather is something that humans can't steal from them again. The Goblins are generous payers when it comes to gold so we delivered a fair bit of it to them in order to get the funds necessary for the war."

"But where did you get the gold?" Amelia said fearing the answer.

"First of all, I'd like to remind you that we did this to defeat Voldemort and not for our own gain." Tonks explained. "Everything we have will either be used to fight them or to help the people in need. It's a sad truth but without money there's nothing that we can do. We needed it so we acted."

"Fine, I'll consider your words." Amelia said understanding the point Tonks was trying to make. She knew all about how it was to work with a cut budget after Fudge reduced hers by fifty percent last year. 'No wonder we're in deep shit right now.'

"Thank you. What we did was infiltrate some of the largest banks in London and secured an amount of gold from each of them. That gold was replaced with Fool's Gold and shouldn't be discovered for years if not decades. The gold we took was exchanged for Galleons at a very good price to the Goblins. That money is now safely tucked away in several vaults."

"Let me get this straight, Auror Tonks." Amelia sighed. "Not only did you simply steal an entire apartment building but you also robbed several banks, exchanged gold for worthless metal, only to change it into Galleons with the Goblins. Is there anything else you'd like to add or should I just fire you now?"

"You can fire me if you want Director Bones." Tonks said not backing down or looking scared. "It doesn't matter if you do, I will still

fight on Harry's side to save the Wizarding World. Because that's what we're trying to do here. This isn't about robbing banks to get rich but to be able to fight Voldemort. I'm sorry if I disappointed you in any way but this needed to be done. We can't afford to sit by and pray that things will be alright. We need to act and start preparing for the worst."

"I'm sorry Madam Bones but I think Tonks is right." Hermione said supporting her friend. "While I may not agree with how they did things they still did it to save all of us. Besides, I think there are bigger problems than stealing some gold from Muggles around, don't you agree?"

"It's not that I don't understand their actions, Miss Granger but there are laws that forbid these actions." Amelia sighed. "As a law enforcer I cannot sit by idle when Witches and Wizards resort to robbing Muggle banks and who knows what else."

"Then you rather have that they do nothing and let this Voldemort guy take over?" Dan said. "I agree that it's wrong to rob banks but desperate time's calls for desperate measures."

"And make no mistake, these are desperate times." Tonks added.

"Very well, I see your point but I'm not happy about this." Amelia sighed. "Not happy at all."

"Understandable." Tonks smiled.

"Wait a minute; I don't understand." Susan said. "If the Galleons are worthless then why did you exchange the gold of Galleons. Wouldn't it be better to keep the gold?"

"Just because the money is fake doesn't mean its value is zero." Hermione said quickly. "A Galleon is still worth the price it has. Only the Goblins have the real gold like they want. For us nothing changes, a Galleon is still worth seventeen Sickles and prices are calculated by that."

"So it's only because the Goblins want as much gold as possible that they give us fake coins?" Susan said understanding where this was headed. "I get it now, thanks Hermione."

"You're welcome." Hermione said happily.

"So what have you and Mr. Potter been doing with all that money?" Amelia wanted to know.

"Well for starters we began stocking rations of food and medicine." Tonks said. "Also we've started buying potion ingredients for later use and we've also bought a lot of books on magic. Books centered on Battle Magic, Healing Magic, Rituals and the like. We figured that we need to get some fresh knowledge and new spells. I mean, you can't fight Death Eaters with tickling and tripping spells can we?"

"I guess we agree on that part." Amelia nodded. "I always said to Fudge that the Aurors need more magic in their arsenal than just some light oriented spells."

"Harry and I agreed that if we fight, we fight to win." Tonks continued. "That means no holding back and no mercy. Don't get me wrong, we won't go on a killing spree but we won't be gentle either." She added after seeing some shocked faces. "We've been trying to come up with a plan to capture Death Eaters and keep them locked up somewhere where Voldemort can't find them."

"That leaves Azkaban right out." Amelia snorted. "The Death Eaters that were caught in the skirmish a few weeks back have been broken out just about a week ago. This is still classified information though."

"Yeah we figured as much." Tonks nodded. She was about to continue when Dobby appeared next to her and started whispering something in her ear. Tonks nodded and addressed the rest of them. "Sorry folks but we're going to take a break. It seems Harry needs me for a moment. I won't be long so why don't you all get some drinks and relax and I'll be right back."

Tonks calmly went upstairs while Dobby served a few drinks and a snack or two. Hermione however was very suspicious and wanted to know what was going on. She stepped from behind the table and headed in the direction of the stairs when Dobby stopped her.

"Dobby is sorry, Miss Grangey but Dobby cannot let Miss Grangey pass." Dobby said looking very distressed at Hermione.

"Why won't she let me see Harry?" Hermione said frustrated. "Something is going on and I don't like it."

"Hermione, why don't you sit down and wait like the rest of us?" Her mother scolded her. "It's obvious that something is going on but Tonks has been fair so far. She promised to tell us everything and she's been doing that. Just be patient and I'm sure you'll see Harry soon enough."

Hermione sighed loudly and went back to her chair. Her mother was right of course. It was no use getting impatient after all. Tonks had promised that she would see Harry by the time the day was over and so far she had been very forthcoming with information. The things she heard still baffled her. The fact that Harry and Tonks were in a relationship was the biggest shock to her. How he had managed to keep that a secret she didn't know but she wondered what else he kept from her.

## Chapter Five: Finding out what happened.

"Sorry about that, Harry wanted to know where things stood." Tonks apologized when she returned. "So where were we in the story?"

"Harry had just defeated You-Know-Who." Susan helped her.

"Ah yes, thank you Susan." Tonks smiled. "After the battle Harry and his friends were taken back to Hogwarts. Hermione and the others needed some medical attention while Harry was transported to the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore seemed to have something to say and wanted to deal with the aftermath of the Ministry right away. When Harry arrived at the office he was tired, in pain and mentally exhausted. But most of all he was angry. Angry because he led his friends into a trap, angry because I had gotten hurt while protecting him, angry at Sirius for fooling around, the list goes on."

"So what did Dumbledore want to speak with Harry about?" Amelia asked. "Surely it could have waited? The poor boy just went through a horrible experience."

"Yes well, our esteemed Headmaster often thinks he knows best when in fact he should consider the opinion of others." Tonks grumbled. "But especially when it comes to Harry, he tends to believe that only he knows what is best. Anyway, Harry wasn't about to let Dumbledore push him around any longer and he calmly demanded an explanation. Inside however he was as calm as a thunderstorm ready to break lose."

"Excuse me but what I don't understand is why Voldemort lured Harry and his friends to the Ministry." Dan interrupted Tonks. "Surely it was not just to harm Harry?"

"Oh no, it wasn't." Tonks shook her head. "It was in fact a ploy to get his hands at a prophecy."

"Wait, you mean like a real prophecy?" Emma said amazed. "Those are actually real?"

"Sure they are." Tonks said. "There is a place in the Ministry of Magic called 'The Hall of Prophecies'. It's there that ever prophecy made is being kept and studied. Prophecies are weird things and

are hard to figure out but they are real nonetheless. Voldemort was in search of one particular prophecy."

"But why did he need Harry? I mean he could just have ordered his men to get it." Dan questioned. "Would have been easier and quicker."

"Yes but the reason is that to take a prophecy it takes the person or persons mentioned in the prophecy." Tonks explained.

"The prophecy is about Harry Potter and Voldemort isn't it?" Amelia gasped. "So the drivel about Harry Potter being the one is true?"

"Yes, the prophecy is about Harry and Voldemort." Tonks confirmed. "I can't tell you what it says but you have the right idea."

"Merlin help us all." Amelia said sinking in her chair. "This can't be happening."

"What? What's wrong?" Susan asked scared.

"Tonks is saying that Harry is prophesied to fight Voldemort." Hermione explained with tears in her eyes. "That's what you mean right?"

"Yes, I'm afraid it is." Tonks nodded sadly. "The prophecy was made a few months before Harry's birth and Voldemort got wind of it. That's why he attacked the Potters that night. When he returned at the end of your fourth year, he realized that he needed to get that prophecy in order to learn what it said. As he wanted to keep his return hidden a while longer he used Harry to get the prophecy for him."

"How did Harry take all of this?" Emma said worried for the poor boy.

"He was floored of course." Tonks sighed. "He knew there was a reason why Voldemort was after him but he always figured that it was more of a revenge kind of thing. When he heard that he was prophesied to fight the man he was shocked. But the thing that hit him hardest was that Dumbledore, a man whom he trusted, kept something like this a secret for so long. Dumbledore argued that he wanted Harry to grow up without the burden of having that knowledge but Harry, and I for that matter, think that was stupid and

irresponsible. If Dumbledore had said something earlier Harry could have trained and learned how to fight. Now Harry, while stronger than most of his age group, is nothing more than a fifth year Hogwarts student. How is he to fight Voldemort?"

"I'm sure Prof. Dumbledore meant well." Hermione said.

"Maybe but that doesn't change the fact that Harry is now unprepared for the war that is about to come." Tonks disagreed. "Dumbledore should have told him, or at least done something to help Harry but he never did. He stuck him with his awful relatives and ignored him. I won't forgive him for what he has done."

"So what happened next?" Susan asked.

"Harry lost it." Tonks said. "He wrecked the Headmaster's office. Dumbledore just sat there and let him. When he calmed down, Harry asked to leave and went to think about what had happened and what he had learned. He was worried about me but I was at St.-Mungo's so he couldn't contact me right away. When he went to the infirmary he was denied to see his friends as they were all resting. Just when Harry needed me the most I wasn't there for him." Tonks let a few tears drop and wiped her nose. "As soon as I regained consciousness I called Dobby to pass on a message to Harry. Seconds later Dobby returned with a letter for me. I could tell that Harry was in a bad shape from what he had written me. He tried to hide it but I noticed it right away."

"What do you mean?" Hermione wanted to know.

"He was feeling guilty for everything." Tonks explained. "He felt like it was all his fault. He wrote that he would understand if I wanted to break up with him and that he wouldn't hold it against me if I hated him. My heart broke right there and then. Harry is the sweetest and most caring person in the world and he thought I hated him. It took all of my strength but I asked Dobby to transport me to just beyond the Hogwarts Wards and to bring him to me."

## FLASHBACK

Harry was wondering around in the castle by himself. His friends were still tied up in the Infirmary and wouldn't be able to leave for several more days. He was glad to hear that they all would be fine.



Hermione was hurt the worst but she would make a complete recovery in the next few days and weeks. He was very worried about Tonks but now that he had heard from her through Dobby, he was glad she was fine too.

He had written a letter to her saying how sorry he was and that he would understand if she wanted to end things with him. What girl would want to go out with someone who had a bull's eye painted on his head in the shape of a lightning bolt? He had always hated his scar but now he hated it even more. It was proof of everything bad in his life. He hated being called the Boy-Who-Lived; he hated the attention it gave him; he hated that he was prophesied to defeat Voldemort or die trying. Everything was his fault, if only he hadn't been born, then his parents would still be alive and his friends wouldn't be hurt.

In his anger he hit the wall with his fist and winced when he felt the bones in his hand break. Biting his lip so he wouldn't scream out some very foul words he cursed himself for being so stupid. Madam Pomfrey would have something to say about this, he was sure of that.

Suddenly Dobby 'popped' up out of nowhere and grabbed him by the hand. Luckily for Harry it was his uninjured hand and a second later he was on the floor rubbing his very sore jaw. Looking up to see who had attacked him he noticed Tonks standing over him looking very pissed off. He gulped as he had never seen her this angry before.

"Now you listen to me Potter and you better listen very closely." Tonks glaring daggers at him. "If I hear one more thing about me breaking up with you, or you breaking up with me, than so help me god, the only breaking that's going to happen is the breaking of your bones. Do you hear me?"

"Euh loud and clear." Harry said getting up still rubbing his jaw.

"Good now come here and kiss me." Tonks all but demanded. Harry quickly obeyed her and kissed her tenderly like he always did. It helped to lift his spirits and when she broke the kiss he felt a bit better. "I'm sorry for hitting you." She apologized.

"Don't be, I deserved it." Harry smiled. "Forgive me?"

"Of course, but don't ever do that again." Tonks said to him. "You scared me. Don't ever think that I hate you. Or that I want to break up with you. I love you Harry James Potter and nothing, not even Voldemort, is going to change that."

"Thank you." Harry said hugging her. "I love you too." He held her close and wrapped his arms around her. She leaned into the hug and sighed in contently, enjoying how he felt against her body. When she pulled away she noticed his hand. It was turning all sorts of colors and it looked really painful.

"What happened to your hand?" She asked him.

"Oh that? I kind of punched the wall." Harry said embarrassed. "Not a smart thing to do."

"No it wasn't." Tonks sighed. "Come on, let me take a look." She gently took his hand and after a few seconds she took out her wand and muttered 'Episkey'. Harry's hand felt instantly better and he could move his fingers again. "There, that should do it. You should still let Madam Pomfrey take a look to be sure."

"Thank you, love." Harry said grateful. "How are you feeling? Shouldn't you be resting right now?"

"I was resting until my boyfriend wrote me a disturbing letter." She glared at him but he could tell the heat of before was gone. "I'm fine by the way, nothing that they can't fix. How is everyone else?"

"They're still at the infirmary but Pomfrey assured me that everyone would make a full recovery." Harry said motioning her to sit down. She did and pulled him close to her. "Neville, Luna and Ginny are already out but Hermione and Ron have to stay a few more days. I haven't seen them yet as I'm not allowed inside."

"I'm glad everyone is okay." Tonks said with a small smile. "How are you doing?"

"I'm so angry Tonks." Harry said honestly. "Everything is my fault. If only I had listened to you and Hermione then maybe things would have gone differently. Now everyone's hurt and Sirius' gone." Tears

ran down his cheeks and no matter what he tried they didn't stop making Tonks pull him to her.

"It's okay Harry, let it out." Tonks said with a tear in her eyes. She pulled him into her arms and wrapped him in a tight hug. She felt tears soaking her shirt but she didn't care. The love of her life was crying his heart out and she would let him. She knew Harry needed this and she vowed to be there for him. She gently rocked him in her arms and rubbed his back while saying soft words to comfort him. When the shaking of his shoulders stopped she looked down and saw that he had fallen asleep in her arms. She smiled and lowered herself to the ground so they would lie down in the grass. For now things were good but she knew the crisis was far from over.

END FLASHBACK

"Harry woke up half an hour later and we stayed together a bit longer before we said goodbye." Tonks continued. "I wanted to stay with him as I could tell he wasn't alright but I couldn't as I had to get back to St.-Mungo's. Harry went back to the castle and spent the next few days alone."

"That poor boy, why wasn't anyone there to help him?" Emma said aghast. "Surely the adults noticed that something was wrong? I mean he just saw people he loves getting hurt and killed. Not to mention hearing that prophecy."

"He should have been but Harry is good at hiding his emotions." Tonks agreed with Emma. "Only those that really know him can tell how he's feeling. To anybody else Harry would seem a bit down but fine otherwise. So nobody bothered to talk to him until Hermione was released out of the Infirmary. But by then the damage was already starting to take hold."

"I knew he wasn't okay." Hermione said angry. "But whenever I wanted to talk to him about it he told me that he was fine. I could tell he wasn't; his eyes were dull and his smile was as fake as they could come. He was distancing himself from me and the others. He denied it of course but I saw it."

"You're right; he was trying to distance himself from you." Tonks nodded. "On the one hand he was so glad that you didn't hate him and that you still considered him your friend. On the other hand he

knew that being friends with you would put you in danger. He wanted to keep you safe and at the time he thought that he was doing the right thing by take some distance from you and the rest."

"I could never hate Harry." Hermione all but shouted. "He's my best friend and nothing will change that. I don't care if Voldemort himself comes after me; I will stand with Harry to the very end." She was surprised when Tonks smiled and hugged her.

"Thank you Hermione; you have no idea how much those words mean to Harry and me." Tonks said softly.

"I meant every word." Hermione said determined.

"I know." Tonks said letting go of the girl and gave her a small kiss on the cheek. "I'm so glad Harry has such a wonderful friend." She giggled when she saw Hermione blush at the praise. "Let's continue, we're almost at the end of the story. When the year ended Harry was shipped back to the Dursleys and I wasn't about to let him stay there all alone. I was on sick leave so I could spend my time with him. I managed to convince Dumbledore that I wanted to guard Harry and he agreed without making a fuss. Harry was a wreck when I saw him, it honestly scared me how hurt and tired he was. Of course, he tried to hide but I quickly made him see the error of his ways." Here she smirked. "I kicked his arse a few times and he quickly opened up to me."

"What did he say?" Hermione asked.

"That's private and between Harry and me so I can't tell you that. It took a while but the important thing to remember is that he hated himself." Tonks said sadly. "He hated how he was the cause of everyone's pain and suffering. He hated being born because he felt like his birth doomed his parents. He hated being the one who defeated Voldemort and now was called the Boy-Who-Lived. No matter what I said or did, it didn't help in changing his mind. I feared that I was losing him and there was nothing I could do. He started having nightmares again and when he did he was trashing around in bed like crazy. I got the bruises to prove it."

"You spent the nights at Privet Drive as well?" Hermione said with a blush on her face.

"Of course, I wasn't going to leave him alone in his state." Tonks said. "Before your imagination runs wild, nothing happened during those nights. Harry was in no condition to do so and I had enough trouble to get him to kiss or hold me. Than one night everything changed."

"What happened?" Amelia asked her.

"I'll show you." Tonks said standing up and called for Dobby who arrived a second later while carrying something. Tonks took it from him and placed it on the table. "This is a pensieve. Hermione or Amelia, could one of you explain what this device does while I prepare the memory?" Hermione nodded and quickly explained to her parents and Susan that a pensieve allowed people to review their memory inside it. Her parents were skeptic but when Amelia confirmed their daughter's words they had no choice but believe it. Meanwhile Tonks placed her wand to her temple and slowly extracted the memory she wanted to show them. When she was ready she dropped it into the pensieve. "Alright, before we go in I need to tell you the following. What you're about to see is something private and really personal. I ask that you will never repeat it to anyone. It will show why Harry and I disappeared for several weeks. Please don't take this the wrong way but if I find that you abused our trust and blabbed this to the world, I will hunt you down and make you regret being born."

"We understand Auror Tonks." Amelia said. She had never seen Tonks so protective and determined before and she knew that the young woman meant every word. "If you want I'm willing to take an Oath."

"No, Harry wants to trust you and feels that by forcing you to take an Oath that trust is forced." Tonks shook her head. "I don't really agree but it's his decision. Please don't betray his trust."

"We won't Tonks, I promise." Hermione said with fire in her eyes. "If someone does, I'll be right beside you to make them regret it."

"Very well, let's hold hands and get ready." Tonks said grabbing Hermione's hand. All of them held hands and together they dived into the pensieve. They appeared into a small bedroom furnished with a simple bed, a small desk with a chair and some books on the ground. When they recovered from the sensation of being sucked

into the pensieve everyone noticed Harry and Tonks lying in the bed. "This is the fifth night Harry has been back at the Dursleys. It's about to start so watch closely. Don't ask questions, just observe."

Harry and Tonks were soundly asleep after a tiring day. Like the nights before Tonks had stayed and held Harry through the night. It had been a hard time for both of them and it seemed things weren't about to change either. Suddenly Tonks was shaken awake when Harry started trashing around in a nightmare again. Tonks immediately grabbed hold of him and tried to wake him up.

"Harry, wake up." Tonks said softly. "Love, wake up. It's a nightmare, you have to wake up. Come on baby, open your eyes."

Harry didn't wake no matter what she said or did. She was starting to worry and was about to slap him when an explosion of light and magic threw her out of the bed and against the opposite wall, almost knocking her out. When her vision returned, her jaw just about dropped to the floor as she saw Harry surrounded by magic. Magic was swirling around him and Tonks could literally feel it in the air. Paper and everything that wasn't attached or heavy lifted into the air and started swirling around.

"What is happening to him?" Hermione shouted worriedly.

"You'll see Hermione, just watch." Tonks said looking at the Harry in her memory.

Tonks watched as Harry was being surrounded by magic and was starting to rise into the air. The bed cracked under the pressure of the Magic and even the ceiling and the ground suffered damage. A perfect sphere of Magic could be seen surrounding Harry. She tried to get closer but there seemed to be an invisible wall separating her from him. She yelled and called for him but he didn't seem to hear her. She watched as Harry's pajamas burned off his body leaving him hanging naked in the air for about a second or two. Then the magic seemed to wrap itself around him and became a solid sphere of Magic. Tonks was unable to see through the sphere so she couldn't tell what was happening.

"Harry!" Tonks yelled again to no avail.

For several minutes Tonks stood there almost going crazy with worry. She had almost called in the Order but something told her that that would be a bad idea. Whatever was happening was not something she wanted to share with Dumbledore and the rest. Suddenly she heard a crack and she noticed that the sphere started to show cracks and tears. She took a step back and watched closely.

In one burst the sphere that surrounded Harry exploded into a million pieces. The pieces of magic looked like a meteor shower disappearing when they hit the floor. The light blinded Tonks for a few seconds and when she looked up she gasped at what she saw. Suspended in the air was a person but it didn't look anything like the Harry she knew.

First there was the long, bright red hair that went past the shoulders. It was unlike anything Tonks had ever seen and she briefly wondered if she could make her hair look like that. Then there was the most feminine face she had ever seen with a cute nose and a pair of perfectly shaped eyebrows. Below were a set of the most inviting lips Tonks had ever seen.

Then came the neck and shoulders. Attached to the shoulders were slender arms, though muscles were clearly visible as well. It showed that there was strength hidden underneath the beauty. The hands were delicate and with long fingers, which were perfectly manicured to boot.

Tonks swallowed when her eyes roamed over the torso and saw a pair of perky breasts with a pink nipple in the middle of each of them. She licked her lips and looked at the breasts that were just the right shape and size. They weren't big but not small either and were firm. The nipples were taunt and pinkish, looking very inviting. Tonks shook her head and continued looking at the figure still hovering in the air.

Next came a defined stomach with a belly button. It was cute in its own way. The stomach was muscled but not enough to see the abdominal muscles. Still there was no trace of fat to be seen. A bit further down a patch of red pubic hair covered something that was without a doubt the female genitalia. Tonks was staring at how beautiful the patch of red pubic hair looked to her and she forced herself to look away. Her eyes noticed the well shaped hips and

upper thighs before going into a beautiful set of legs that any woman would kill for.

Ever so slowly the figure started to descend until she was lying on the destroyed bed. Tonks slowly approached the bed and reached out with her hand. The figure was unconscious and didn't move an inch. Tonks sat down on the bed, still in shock at what she had seen, looking over the figure. There was but one blemish on the entire body and that was the proof that this figure was Harry. The lightning bolt shaped scar was still present on the forehead but other than that, there was not one scar visible.

Tonks' hand gently touched Harry's cheek and she felt a jolt of magic running through her. If anything else it proved to her once more that this was Harry. Only he felt like this and there was no mistaking it. Harry had somehow been transformed into a girl. How and why this had happened she had no idea.

Suddenly she panicked. The amount of magic that had been released was phenomenal and she was sure the Ministry and Dumbledore would be knocking on the Dursley's door in minutes. She was surprised that the Dursley's weren't banging on the door already so she sprung into action and conjured a blanket and put it around Harry. Then she gathered all of their stuff and packed it into a suitcase. She called Dobby and asked him to 'pop' them as far away from the Dursley's as possible. Seconds later they were gone, no evidence of their staying there remaining.

Tonks and the rest were ejected from the memory as soon as it was done. They landed in a heap on the floor and they quickly got up and sat down in their seats. Needless to say, everyone but Tonks was shocked into silence. They had just seen the most amazing thing and they had trouble believing it.

"So, any questions?" Tonks said grinning somewhat.

"Was any of that real?" Amelia asked suspicious.

"All of it." Tonks said. "Everything happened exactly the way you saw it. You'll see the proof later on when you meet Harry. I know it sounds unbelievable and impossible but it's the truth."



"You're telling me that Harry, my best male friend, is a girl now?" Hermione asked shocked. "How is that even possible? Can magic really do that?"

"Yes Hermione, Harry is one hundred percent female now." Tonks explained. "Not only on the outside but on the inside as well. We used several medical charms and found that even the plumbing has changed. He has ovaries and a womb just like you and me. In fact, his entire DNA has been overwritten which is why he resembles his mother now instead of his father."

"But why did this happen?" Emma asked still reeling from the shock. "I mean, surely this isn't normal?"

"No, but Harry is anything but normal." Tonks grinned at the woman. "As to why, we can only guess. We have a theory but nothing is sure. We figure that Harry was so full of self-hatred and self-loathing that he was destroying himself. His mind was shutting down and his body was closely following. You saw how skinny and sick he looked. So his magic did what it had to do to survive. It changed him into the exact opposite of who he was, namely a girl."

"You're saying that his magic did this by itself?" Hermione asked not really believing it. "That would suggest that magic is sentient. There's no proof of that anywhere."

"Hermione, sometimes you have to ignore what your brain and common sense tells you." Tonks said to the girl. "You're right, there is no proof of magic being sentient but what do we really know about magic? Sure we can do spells and use it but we have no idea where magic comes from. We don't know why one person has it and another doesn't. Nor do we know why one magical person is stronger than the other and so on. Magic is still a mystery even to us Witches and Wizards."

"Tonks is right." Amelia said to Hermione. "There's a whole department in the Ministry of Magic that is dedicated to research magic and what it entails. It has been around for decades, centuries even but they're not even close to discovering what magic truly is or what it is capable of."

"I see your point." Hermione conceded. "Still, it's hard to believe."

"Tell me about it." Susan snorted. "Harry makes one beautiful girl."

"Hand off, Bones." Tonks growled good mannered to Susan. "Harry's mine."

"You don't mind that he's a girl now?" Dan asked surprised.

"Well, it wasn't easy the first few days and weeks let me tell you." Tonks admitted. "Harry was in a right state for about a week or so but no I don't mind. I love Harry and that means everything about him. He's still the same Harry on the inside and that's the Harry I fell in love with. The package may have changed but the contents didn't, if you get what I mean? It was an adjustment for both of us."

"I want to see Harry." Hermione said getting up. "Now!"

"Very well, follow me." Tonks nodded. "Frankly, I'm surprised you managed to restrain yourself this long Hermione."

"You can thank Dobby for that." Hermione smiled. "I was about to follow you upstairs but he stopped me. He looked very embarrassed by it and I could see he didn't like it so I gave in. I didn't want to cause him grief."

"Dobby is very protective of Harry and you." Tonks smiled. "He knows how important you are to Harry so he considers you his third mistress."

"Third? Who are the first two?" Hermione asked.

"Harry and me of course." Tonks laughed and she led them upstairs to meet the new Harry.

## Chapter Six: Meeting the new Harry

Harry was feeling miserable and wanted nothing more than to go to sleep in order to forget what he was going through right now. Sadly, that was not possible as he had his best friend waiting downstairs. He was both glad and terrified to see her. He hoped she would understand the things that he kept from her and why he did it. He wondered how she would react when she saw the new him. Hopefully she would react better than he did. Although his reaction was justified in his opinion.

### FLASHBACK

Harry woke up feeling very weird and somewhat disorientated. He opened his eyes and looked at the ceiling, noticing that it was different from his room at the Dursleys. Turning his head he saw that the ceiling wasn't the only thing he didn't recognize as he seemed to be in some sort of cabin. Suddenly the door opened and he smiled as he saw the love of his life enter the room.

"Well, look who's up." Tonks smiled somewhat nervous. "Finished your nap, sleeping beauty?"

"Hi love." Harry said but to his surprise his voice sounded different but he shrugged it off. "Where are we?"

"While that is a good question, I think we have more pressing matters to discuss." Tonks said pointing to him. "You've been out for three whole days. What do you remember?"

"Three days?" Harry said shocked. "Euhm, I remember going to sleep but after that nothing. Did something happen?"

"You could say that." Tonks said nervously. "Harry, love, haven't you noticed yet?"

"Noticed what?" Harry said sitting up in the bed. "I don't see what...." Suddenly his words stopped when he saw long hair fall in front of his eyes. "What the....?" He took the hair and noticed it was red in color and very soft to touch. It fell down his shoulders to his chest and breasts. His brain seemed to catch up with his thoughts and he screamed out in surprise and shock. Slowly his hands

reached up to his chest and touched the pair of breasts. "Tonks, I have breasts. What the hell happened to me?"

"Calm down Harry." Tonks urged him.

"Calm down? I've got breasts for god's sake." Harry shouted in panic. "I'm a guy. I'm not supposed to have these."

"Well, about you being a guy." Tonks hesitated. "It seems that changed a few nights ago."

Harry's eyes shot up to hers and widened in panic before he jumped out of bed and tore his nightgown off. He looked horrified as he saw that 'little Harry' was gone and replaced by something he had only heard about. There was now a patch of red pubic hair and what appeared to be a vagina.

"Tonks, I have a..." Harry said not finishing the sentence.

"A vagina, Harry." Tonks helped him somewhat amused at his reaction. "It's called a vagina."

Harry did the only thing any man would have done in that situation. He fainted.

END FLASHBACK

That had been so embarrassing. Harry Potter fainting. He had faced a teacher possessed by Voldemort, a bloody Basilisk, a hundred Dementors, a dragon, even Voldemort and he had never fainted. But show him a vagina and he fainted. Okay, so maybe it was because it was his vagina but still, it was damned embarrassing. Tonks still liked to tease him for it.

After he woke up, Tonks explained everything to him and he was stunned to say the least. She told him that she basically kidnapped him from the Dursleys right after the change and asked Dobby to get them as far away as possible. She told him that they were in a small abandoned cabin in the woods, at least several hundred miles from Privet Drive.

After spending several days hiding away in the cabin with Harry being very moody and depressed about his change, Tonks told him

that they would have to start planning for the war. That kept his mind occupied for a bit and he seemed to return to his former self. Together they planned how to get a headquarters in London and how they could get the funds. A week later they had acquired their current building and another week later the funds to fight Voldemort. Now with only two more weeks before the summer ended, Harry was waiting to meet Hermione again.

He was brought out of his musing when someone knocked the door before coming in. He sat a little straighter in bed and gulped nervously. Tonks smiled at him like she always did and jumped into the bed next to him before she kissed him, hugging him close. She always knew how to cheer him up.

Then the others entered the room as well. First were Amelia and Susan Bones, who greeted him both with a smile and few words. He politely returned the smile and wished them welcome. Next were two people he had only seen once. They were Mr. and Mrs. Granger and they too smiled at him, which he returned as well. Lastly was Hermione who stood in the doorway looking at him intently. He gulped once more and greeted her.

"H-Hello Hermione, it's g-good to see you." Harry said nervously.

Hermione didn't answer right away as she was too shocked to say something. She took a few steps closer towards him and kept staring at him. She saw that she was making him uncomfortable but she couldn't help it. It was just so strange to see her best friend like this. When she reached his bed she sat down next to him and gazed into his eyes. She had always loved Harry's eyes and she marveled at how they glowed when she looked at them. There was no one with eyes like Harry. No matter what how Harry had changed; his eyes were still the same and that was proof enough for her that this was indeed her best friend.

"It's really you." She said gently touching his cheek with her hand.

"Y-yeah." Harry nodded scared she would reject him and think of him as freak.

"I'm so glad you're okay." Hermione said softly before she wrapped her arms around her and gave him a hug. Harry tensed a bit but then relaxed into the hug, relieved that she didn't hate him or was

scared of him. A huge weight had fallen off his shoulders and some tears ran down his cheeks. "I was so worried about you."

"I'm sorry for worrying you but things were hectic for a while." Harry told her.

"I know and don't worry I'm not mad at you." Hermione said letting go of him. "You're still my best friend. I don't care about anything else." Harry smiled at her and wiped the tears on his cheeks.

"Thanks 'Mione." Harry said happily. "That means a lot to me."

"You're welcome." Hermione smiled before she became serious. "But don't think I'll forgive you so easily for keeping all those secrets from me. Not to mention all the spells and magic you learned without me. Really Harry, how could you do that to me?"

Harry blinked a few times before bursting out in laughter. His laughter seemed to evaporate the tension in the room and soon everyone was laughing as well. Hermione frowned but she too started giggling and laughing like the rest of them when she realized how silly that sounded.

"Only you would ignore all the rest but complain about not learning, baby girl." Dan laughed at his daughter. Inwardly he was immensely proud of her as not everyone would react as responsible and caring as she did. "Only you."

"So why are you in bed?" Hermione asked ignoring the jibe her father made at her expense. "What's wrong? Why are you blushing like that?" Hermione asked when Harry's face became bright red.

"Harry's been having some feminine problems." Tonks said hugging her boyfriend. "She's having her periods and it still gives her trouble."

"Oh!" Hermione said.

"Yeah laugh it up Tonks." Harry grumbled. "It's not like I'm not suffering here."

"I'm sorry baby." Tonks said smiling. "Want me to kiss it better?"

"No." Harry quickly said crawling under the sheets. "Honestly, I don't know how you girls deal with this. I feel fat, bloated, ugly and very sore. I hate this."

Tonks could tell that Harry was close to breaking down so she just hugged him and pulled him close to her. She softly said some words and smiled when he nodded into the hug. She kissed his forehead and motioned everyone to stand up and leave. Hermione looked like she wanted to protest but her mother dragged her outside.

"But mom, I want to stay." Hermione complained.

"I know sweetheart but right now Harry needs to be alone." Emma said. "He's embarrassed and ashamed for what he's feeling. You need to give him some time to get used to having you around again."

"But it's not his fault." Hermione argued. "Surely he knows that?"

"Do you remember your first few periods?" Emma asked gently. "Because I sure do. I was scared and very embarrassed until your grandmother helped me through it. So were you if you'll remember. Harry however doesn't have a mum to help him, not to mention that he used to be a boy until a few weeks back. Give him some time and I'm sure you'll be included in his personal life again."

"I guess you're right." Hermione sighed. She turned around as she heard the door opening and saw Tonks coming into the hallway. "Is Harry alright?"

"Harry's fine." Tonks reassured her. "I'm sorry but she's still very emotional at times about all of this. She's been making very good progress so far but having her periods is very tiring for her."

"You're using female pronouns now?" Hermione noticed.

"Yes, not all the time but I'm slowly changing them." Tonks nodded. "She was against it at first but now she's getting more accepting of them. I wouldn't recommend any of you using them yet."

"He still considers himself a boy." Dan understood. He would do the same thing if he were in Harry's place.

"Yes but that's not helping the healing process." Tonks nodded. "She needs to accept the truth and only then will she get better. Of course, one cannot expect her to accept everything like that in a few days. I gave her a sleeping potion so she should sleep until morning. I propose we do the same, I'm knackered as well. It's been a long day for everyone."

"I agree." Amelia said yawning a bit. "I'm sure we could all use some rest."

"Let me show you to your rooms." Tonks said motioning everyone to follow her. She led them to the floor below where all the apartments had remained to house them. Amelia and Susan choose one and bid everyone good night. The Grangers took an apartment with three bedrooms and Hermione hugged Tonks once more and thanked her taking care of her best friend.

"You're welcome Hermione." Tonks said hugging the girl back. "I'll see you in the morning. If you need anything, just call Dobby."

"I will, good night." Hermione nodded.

When Harry woke up the following morning he felt much better. The pain and soreness was mostly gone and he was very glad for that. He hated how his periods made him feel. He really gained a lot more respect for women now that he knew just how bad periods could be. He had laughed a few times before about it but he wouldn't do that anymore. In fact, if someone made fun of women and their periods he would introduce his knee to their balls.

He looked at the sleeping figure lying next to him and smiled. Tonks looks so beautiful when she was sleeping. He owed so much to her; not everyone would be so accepting of the changes he had undergone. Tonks however had stuck with him every step of the way. She had stayed with him when he was mad, depressed and emotional. Even when he considered himself a freak she slapped him and told him that he was the man she loved and nobody, not even him, was allowed to say or think that about him.

He leaned over her and kissed her temple, smiling at how she reacted to the kiss. Grinning he kissed her again but this time he pressed a little harder. He knew she was starting to wake up and



knew how much she loved his kisses in the morning. When her eyes opened he smiled and kissed her on the lips. Tonks reacted instantly and pulled his body closer to hers.

"Good morning beautiful." Harry said when the kiss ended.

"It sure is, love." Tonks smiled and kissed him again. She let her hands roam through the soft red hair and sighed into the kiss. She always loved his hair and that hadn't changed. She kissed him a few more times on the lips before she moved over to Harry's neck, knowing that he was very sensitive there. Harry's moan of pleasure only deepened her lust and she rolled them over so she was on top of him.

"God, you're so beautiful." Harry said when she looked at him.

"Thank you love." Tonks smiled at him. "You have no idea what you're doing to me when you say that."

"Oh?" Harry said interested. "Is it something good?"

"Oh yeah." Tonks grinned before she attacked Harry's collarbone earning another moan of pleasure. "It makes me do this." Her hand slipped under Harry's shirt, touching skin. "And this." Her hand travelled up to Harry's sides to her breasts, which made Harry gasp in pleasure when she gently grabbed hold of one. "That's good right?"

"So good." Harry nodded in agreement only to moan when Tonks pinched her nipple softly.

"Touch me Harry." Tonks asked him.

Harry did as he was told and gently lifted Tonks' shirt over her head. He stared at her exposed breasts and to Tonks' surprise he flipped her over so she was under him now. He grinned and kissed her like she had done to him. Tonks was very sensitive at the spot where her neck and shoulders joined and he was well aware of that little titbit of information. He attacked the spot with kisses and gentle love bites making his girlfriend moan in pleasure. Meanwhile his right hand had cupped one of her breasts and gently squeezed it before teasing the nipple that was already erect.

"Oh Harry, don't tease me like that." Tonks said moaning.

"But I love teasing you." Harry smiled but before giving in. Kisses trailed down her shoulder to her other breast and he latched onto the nipple, sucking and biting it much to Tonks' pleasure. His other hand had abandoned her breast and was slowly making its way down. He touched her stomach and sides softly causing goose bumps all over her body. When he slipped his hand into her panties Tonks almost lost it completely.

Tonks was in heaven right now. The man she loved, even if he was girl now, was pleasing her and she loved every second of it. She knew she was soaking wet by the time his hand entered her panties and she gasped as she felt Harry stimulate that little bud of pleasure just like she taught him. Her arms grabbed Harry's shirt and almost ripped it clean of her body exposing those marvellous breasts of her. Her hands went straight to them and she smirked as she heard Harry moan in pleasure. He wasn't the only one to get to have some fun. She was about to continue her ministrations when Harry leaned back and whispered something.

"No love, this is your moment." Harry said to her taking off her panties in the process.

Tonks was about to protest but she could only gasp in pleasure as she felt a finger slip inside her. A wave of pleasure went through her and she forgot all about protesting. Harry kept kissing her body while moving down towards her pleasure centre. She closed her eyes and gripped the sheet as she felt Harry's tongue tease her most sensitive spot. His finger was still moving inside her and the added pleasure of Harry's tongue was enough to send her into bliss.

Harry felt Tonks' inner muscles tighten around his finger and he felt her hips buckling when she came. He moved his finger a few more times to prolong his girlfriends' orgasm and slowly withdrew from inside her when he saw she was spent. He reached up and kissed her gently and smiled at the look on her face.

"That was incredible." Tonks said when she regained speech.  
"Thank you, love."

"You're welcome." Harry smiled at her. "I love you so much."

"I love you too." Tonks said before she kissed him. She could taste herself on him but she didn't care. She kissed him and poured as much love into as she could. They spent the next few minutes cuddling together before Harry had to go to the bathroom. She released him and watched as he ran to the bathroom. She laughed a bit at seeing a topless Harry run like that. She got out of bed as well and tore the sheet off the bed, dumping them into the basket for filthy clothes. Dobby would be pleased to have some extra work to do.

Tonks gathered clothes for her and Harry and prepared for the rest of the day. They quickly took a shower and dressed while both had broad grins on their faces. They went down to the living room where Dobby had just served breakfast for everyone. Hermione and the rest were already there and were waiting for them.

"Good morning everyone." Tonks greeted them while Harry waved at everyone.

"Morning Tonks, Harry." Everyone greeted back.

"Sorry for taking so long to get up." Tonks apologized. "You could have started without us you know. We wouldn't have minded."

"No worries Tonks, we just got here." Emma said smiling at the young woman.

Harry and Tonks quickly sat down and Dobby served breakfast for everyone. It was a breakfast for champions with eggs, bacon, sausages, fruit, vegetables and much more. Harry didn't wait and loaded his plate and started eating much to everyone's pleasure. It seemed that Harry was feeling much better and that made everyone happy.

During breakfast they talked about non-essential things and Harry was grateful that they didn't question him right away about what had happened. When everyone had finished eating, Harry insisted that he would clear the table, much to Dobby's displeasure. Harry was firm though saying that he needed to do his part in the household. Tonks compromised with Dobby saying that there was a lot of laundry to be done today. Everyone laughed as Dobby happily jumped around knowing that there was still work for him.

"Dobby is the best elf." Harry smiled. "He can be a bit much at times but he always means well. He's part of my family so please treat him well."

"Don't worry Harry, we love him already." Dan said reassuring him. "I wanted to thank you Harry, for doing all of this for us. We really appreciate it."

"Mr. Granger is right." Amelia said. "We owe you our lives. If you and Tonks hadn't warned us, we would've been dead by now. So thank you Harry."

"Please, you don't have to thank me." Harry said embarrassed. "I only did what was normal. I mean, it's because of me that Hermione is in danger so it's only right to help you. I wish it wasn't necessary but I can't change the fact that we're friends."

"You got that right, buster." Hermione said menacingly. "And don't you forget it."

"I won't. Trust me; Tonks drilled it into my head more than once." Harry looked at his girlfriend. "As for you Madam Bones, I couldn't stand by and let Voldemort kill you. You're too important to Susan and the Wizarding World to let that happen."

"How do you mean?" Amelia said narrowing her eyes.

"Do you know why Voldemort attacked you?" Harry asked her. "It's because he fears you."

"Me? But I'm no match for him in any way." Amelia said shocked.

"No, you're wrong." Tonks added. "He fears the change you represent. Rumours are already going around in the Ministry that you are the most likely candidate for the position of Minister of Magic. When he heard of those rumours from his spies he knew that you were a danger to him."

"But why?" Amelia said not understanding.

"Simple, it's because you're not on his side." Harry explained. "Not only that but you're firmly against him. If you became Minister of Magic instead of one of his men or someone he could bribe or

intimidate, he would have to work harder to get control. He knows you're incorruptible and that you're strong enough to resist him. It would mean that you would take an active stance against him."

"But I'm not even sure that I want to be Minister of Magic." Amelia frowned. "I'm quite happy where I am, thank you very much."

"I understand but please reconsider it." Harry said. "If one of Voldemort's supporters becomes Minister it will only take a while before he's in charge. Can you imagine what will happen if he's allowed to rule Magical Britain? People like you and me would only last a few days before being killed. Women and children will be killed in the streets or sold as slaves. Everyone he deems unworthy will die, just because he thinks less of them. Do you really want that to happen?"

"You can't Auntie. Harry is right; you're the only person for the job." Susan said pleading to her aunt.

"I guess you leave me no choice." Amelia sighed loudly.

"On the contrary, we always have a choice." Tonks said. "We can choose to do the easy thing or we can do the right thing. What you choose is up to you but we hope you do what is right."

"Very well, I really don't want to be Minister but I'm afraid you're right." Amelia nodded. "What do you suggest?"

"Contact Dumbledore and the Wizengamot." Harry said. "Let them know you're alive and that you're running for Minister. Tell them you have the confidence and trust of Harry Potter. It should help you now that I'm the hero of the Wizarding World again."

"About that, I'm sorry for the way the Ministry treated you last year." Amelia said. "I promise you that Fudge and Umbridge will not get away with what they did to you."

"I appreciate it Madam but I'd rather not be involved." Harry sighed. "I'm sure Tonks told you that my scars are all gone. The proof of her forcing me to write with that bloodquill is gone. It doesn't matter any longer; she'll get what's coming to her in some way or another."

"I guess I understand it if you'd rather not draw any attention to yourself." Amelia said to him. "I'll figure something out, don't worry."

"Thank you." Harry said gratefully.

"Can I ask you how you learned about Voldemort's plan to dispose of me?" Amelia asked.

"Quite simple actually." Tonks smiled. "We've been tracking Death Eaters for several weeks now. I infiltrate shady bars and listen to the scum that hang around. You'd be surprised with what you learn from a drunken man. I heard a couple rookie Death Eaters boast about how they were going to kill the next Minister of Magic."

"We heard about the rumours as well so we knew who they meant." Harry said. "We almost didn't get the information but luckily the guy was drunk enough not to notice that we were fishing for information. When we got what we needed we sprung into action and got you and Susan out of there."

"That's quite a risk you were taking." Dan said impressed. "You could have been discovered."

"We won't win this war without taking some risks, Mr. Granger." Harry said. "Truthfully, I'm scared beyond believe every time but we don't have a choice. We need information about Voldemort and his plans. We haven't learned much but what we've learned managed to help us a lot."

"What did you learn?" Hermione asked her best friend.

"We've learned that Voldemort is still building his army. He isn't anywhere near ready to attempt an attack on the Ministry or Hogwarts." Harry explained. "Still, he's getting stronger every day and we're not. That's why he wanted a weak Minister, one who wouldn't dare go against him and his Death Eaters."

"So what do you expect from me? Say I get elected as Minister?" Amelia asked Harry.

"I don't want you to think that I'm telling you what to do." Harry hesitated. "I think you should consider purging those who are aligned with Voldemort; or at least those that could do damage."

You'll never be able to kick them all out but the more the better. Select someone whom you trust to take your place as Director of Law Enforcement, someone you'll know to do the right thing when the situation calls for it."

"I'm sensing you have a suggestion on whom to choose?" Amelia smiled.

"It depends." Harry admitted. "We feel that Kingsley Shacklebolt is the man for the job. He has the experience of being an Auror, he's been actively fighting for the light for years and he's loyal to you and Dumbledore."

"It's the Dumbledore part that bothers me." Amelia admitted.

"I know and while I understand that, I also think that we need him." Harry said. "I'm not fond of Dumbledore myself at the moment but his experience and knowledge are invaluable. He's a stubborn old man who thinks only he knows what best but his heart is in the right place. He just needs a kick in the family jewels to wake him up."

"Harry, you can't do that." Hermione said spluttering at the thought of kicking the Headmaster.

"I didn't mean it literally, Hermione." Harry smiled. "I just mean that he needs to understand that he's not the only one fighting this war. Besides, with all due respect, what has the order done so far? They talk and talk about Voldemort and his Death Eaters but they don't act. He's too soft on them. I understand that some people should deserve a second chance but Death Eaters aren't part of those people. If he had been more realistic he would have understood that some people cannot be redeemed."

"Are you suggesting that we should execute all of them?" Amelia said shocked.

"No, of course not. I'm just suggesting that there are individuals that don't deserve lenience." Harry quickly said. "People like Bellatrix Lestrange or Lucius Malfoy for example. Those who murder, torture and rape because they enjoy it don't deserve a second chance in my book. They destroyed lives just because they thought they were better than their victims. Why should they be treated differently?"

"I agree with Harry." Dan said suddenly. "Sometimes there is just no other option. Those monsters don't deserve a second chance and from what I've heard most of them already did get it. If others learn that being a murderer or a rapist is going to get you executed, it will make them think twice about joining this madman."

"I need to think about this." Amelia said and she stood up from the table. "Please excuse me for a while. I will let Dumbledore and the Ministry know that I'm alive and well. I will put up my official candidacy for Minister today as well. I will get back to you on how to deal with Death Eaters later on."

"Take all the time you need, Madam Bones." Harry smiled at the woman. "I understand this is a hard decision to make."

"I need to go as well." Tonks said. "I'm sure mum and dad are worried. I'd like to bring them here as well."

"Of course, be careful okay?" Harry said worried.

"Don't worry; I won't be long." Tonks said while giving him a kiss. "I love you."

"I love you too." Harry said a bit embarrassed to say it in front of Hermione and the rest.

"Oh and don't let Hermione into the library." Tonks shouted as she went out. "She banned for several days." She laughed at seeing Hermione's shocked face and quickly left the building but she could swear that she heard Hermione yell out some very nasty words.

Harry looked in amazement at Hermione who had both hands clasped around her mouth. He had never heard Hermione used that kind of language and frankly he thought it was funny as hell. Her parents didn't find it all that funny however judging from the glares they gave their daughter.

"Hermione Jane Granger, you should be ashamed of yourself." Her mother said angry. "I thought we raised you better than that."

"Sorry mum, it just slipped out." Hermione apologized, blushing beet red.



"Just for that, I'll double the number of days you're banned from Harry's Library." Dan said disappointed. "And don't try to change my mind young lady. While you might soon be an adult in the Wizarding World, I still expect you to behave yourself."

"Yes daddy. I'm sorry." Hermione said dejected.

"Come on 'Mione, I'll show you around." Harry said trying to cheer her up. "You're welcome to join us, Susan."

"Thanks Harry but maybe later, I'm sure you and Hermione have some things to talk about." Susan said to them. "Besides, if you don't mind I'd like to take a look at that library of yours."

"Knock yourself out; it's on the seventh floor." Harry said dragging Hermione out of the room.

Dan and Emma smiled at the kids and figured they could use some extra peace and quiet as well. They went back to the apartment they had been given and relaxed a bit. The events of the day before had started to catch up to them and they still needed to discuss everything they had learned.

## Chapter Seven: A tour of the place

Harry dragged Hermione down several floors until they reached the third floor where Harry stopped in front of the door of one apartment. Hermione wondered what had happened to all the other doors as that door was the only one she saw. Harry grinned at her confused face and opened the door. He pulled her inside and laughed as he saw her jaw drop.

Hermione looked at the immense space she was standing in. What she thought was one apartment had been transformed into one big open space. On her right she would see something that resembled the mats that were used in martial art classes while on her left was a wooded floor that was polished to shine. She turned to Harry and demanded that he explain.

"Tonks and I turned several apartments into one training place." Harry explained. "Over there we practice martial arts like Judo and Karate. We're not very good at them yet but we're getting better. It's really fun to learn and it's great for your body and condition."

"What about over there?" Hermione pointed to the wooden floor.

"Oh that's where we practice with swords." Harry shrugged.

"Swords?" Hermione squeaked. "Why are you learning to fight with a sword?"

"Because it's fun?" Harry laughed. "No really, that's not the only reason though. It's also to have an extra edge in battle. I don't know if we'll ever use it but it can't hurt to know how to use one. Want to see some moves?"

Hermione smiled at seeing her friend so relaxed. She had a thousand questions for him but she couldn't bring herself to ask them when she knew it would ruin his good mood. She nodded with a smile and watched as Harry disappeared for a few moments only to return wearing a sweat pants and a top.

"Okay since Judo requires two people, I'll show you some Kata's from Karate." Harry said before he started to move around.

Hermione watched in amazement as Harry moved thru the Kata with relative ease. His movements were graceful and light but she could tell there was strength hidden below the beauty of the moves. She watched him spin around and kick into the air at an imaginary opponent. When he finished Harry was breathing somewhat deeply but he seemed very relaxed.

"Harry, that was amazing." Hermione complimented him. "I've never seen anything like it."

"Thanks 'Mione." Harry said blushing a bit from the praise. "I like practicing it because it always manages to calm me down. It's a great feeling."

"Maybe you could teach me as well?" Hermione asked him.

"Really, you want to learn?" Harry said happily. "That would be great, we could practice together. You'll see its great fun."

"Hold your horses, Harry." Hermione laughed at his excitement. "Why don't you show me around some more to begin with? We can practice later today if you want."

"Sure." Harry agreed. "Over there is the meditation area. It's my second favorite place in the building."

"Oh, what's your most favorite place then?" Hermione questioned. "I'm sorry, I didn't catch that." She said when she heard Harry mumbling something.

"I said my most favorite place is the bed Tonks and I sleep in." Harry said with a red face.

Hermione blinked a few times before she too started blushing. She didn't know how to answer to that so she just nodded her understanding and motioned Harry to show her the meditation area. Harry relaxed and led her to a small Japanese garden inside the room. It was a beautiful little garden with some grass and some waterways. Right next to it was a pond with a few Koi fish.

"Harry, this is beautiful." Hermione gushed in surprise. "How did you make this?"

"Well, Tonks and I looked into a way to meditate in order to learn Occlumency." Harry admitted. "We came upon this Muggle book about Zen and we liked it immediately. It wasn't all that hard to make once you have the necessary material. It only took us about a day to finish it."

"Still, I can see why you like this place." Hermione said impressed. "What does it feel like to meditate?"

"It's hard to explain really." Harry said. "When I meditate, I feel like the whole world disappears from around me. I feel at ease and relaxed, like I'm all alone in the universe. I try to banish every thought out of my head and just think about clearing my mind and building my mental shields. It was very hard to achieve in the beginning. You wouldn't believe how many times I just fell asleep."

Hermione laughed at the thought of Harry sitting in the garden trying to meditate only to fall asleep after a while. She could already picture him sitting there with a bit of drool running down his chin. When Harry asked her what was so funny, she quickly explained her thought causing him to chase her in mock madness. They only stopped running when both of them were too tired to run any longer. They relaxed for a few moments until Harry pulled her up saying that the tour wasn't finished just yet.

He then took her to one of the adjourned apartments that he and Tonks had transformed into a potion lab. Dozens of cauldron lined the room and from what Hermione could tell some of them were currently brewing. She listened at Harry tell her how they had started brewing potions in order to prepare for the war. With the money they had made from selling the gold to the Goblins, they had bought enough ingredients to last several months.

"Harry, this is unbelievable." Hermione said as she read what potion was currently being prepared in one cauldron. "This says that you're brewing 'Bruise-Healing Paste'. That's above OWL level."

"Yeah, I know." Harry proudly said. "Would you believe that I actually enjoy brewing potions when there's no greasy git hovering around me?"

"I guess Snape does have a way to annoy people in his class." Hermione admitted.

"That's putting it gently." Harry snorted but didn't say anything else. "We're also trying to come up with ways to use potions as weapons but we haven't found much yet. Our main focus is to prepare enough healing Potions as possible. We'll worry about other things later."

"So what else is there to see?" Hermione wanted to know.

"Well, there's still the swimming pool and the running track to see." Harry said. "And of course the library but you're banned from entering there."

"That's so unfair." Hermione complained. "Come on Harry, can't you do something about that?"

"Oh no, I'm not getting involved into this." Harry said quickly. "I don't know what you did to get banned from the library but I'm not getting between you and Tonks. Let me tell, she can be downright vicious if she wants to. One time, she played a prank on one of her colleagues. The guy had made some rude comment about her Metamorph powers and he dearly regretted it."

"What did he do?" Hermione asked curious.

"He asked to change the size of her breasts during training." Harry said scowling. "She retaliated by hexing him so that every time he thought of something perverted, he wet himself. The poor guy has been called 'Pants-wetter Bill' for years now. He still hasn't recovered from all the humiliation. According to her, he runs every time he sees her."

"That's awful." Hermione giggled a bit. "Served him right though."

"Yeah but now you see why I don't come between you and Tonks." Harry said smiling. "It's for my own good. Besides, I don't think your parents would appreciate me butting in with your punishment."

"I guess you're right." Hermione said sadly.

"Cheer up 'Mione." Harry said. "There's plenty to do and you'll be in that library before you know it."

"But there's only two weeks left until the start of school year." Hermione whined. "My punishment will last almost as long as that."

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that." Harry said. "I'm going to miss Hogwarts."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked alarmed. "You're not thinking of quitting are you?"

"I'm not going back to Hogwarts 'Mione." Harry said sadly. "I mean, look at me. I'm a girl now, can you imagine what people will say. I'll be the laughingstock of Hogwarts."

"That's not true." Hermione said but even she realized how weak those words sounded.

"Come on 'Mione, you're too intelligent to believe that." Harry said looking at her. "Look at how they treated me last year. It would be thousand times worse. I can see Snape and Malfoy already. They'd be on me like vultures on a carcass."

Hermione winced knowing her friend was right. For all the wonderful things the Wizarding World had to offer, they were surprisingly unaccepting to those different from them. It went from werewolves to Veela and Goblins. Even Muggleborns were hardly accepted by a part of the Wizarding population. It saddened her that a world with such possibilities could still be so stupid at times.

"Well, then I guess I'm not returning either." Hermione said determined.

"What? No, Hermione you can't do that." Harry said quickly. "I can't ask you to risk your future like that."

"Shut up Harry, you're not asking me to do anything." Hermione rebuked. "I'm doing this on my own. I'm not about to leave my best friend alone while I'm worrying several hundred miles away. I'm staying with you and that's that."

"But Hermione, what about your NEWT's?" Harry said shocked.

"I can always take them later on Harry." Hermione smiled. "Don't worry about it. Besides, you need my help."

"Really? You mean it?" Harry said happily. "Thanks 'Mione, you're the best." He said grabbing her in a hug.

"And don't you forget it." Hermione laughed as well.

"I'm sorry for keeping all those secrets from you." Harry said sobering up a bit. "I wanted to tell you many times but it never seemed right."

"I know, I was a bit mad at first but now I understand why you didn't tell me." Hermione said reassuring him. "Can I ask you one question?"

"You can ask me anything 'Mione." Harry smiled.

"Are you happy with Tonks?" Hermione asked him.

"Of course; Tonks is amazing." Harry smiled his brightest smile. A smile that was reserved for showing how happy he truly was. "I admit we're a bit weird. I mean, she's seven years older than I am but I don't care and neither does she. We fell in love after becoming best friends so what more can I ask. She stuck with me throughout all of this." He motioned his hands over his body. "How many girls would do that? "

"Not a lot." Hermione nodded. "She's really something special, isn't she?"

"Oh yeah, she's great." Harry said happily. "She's smart, funny, caring and strong. I mean she kicks my butt each and every time when we duel but I'm getting better. The first few times I didn't last five minutes but now I can hold her off for about ten minutes. She's brutal during training though; there's a reason why I'm brewing 'Bruise-Healing Paste', you know."

"One more question but you don't have to answer if you don't want to." She asked. "How are you feeling about being a girl?"

"I was wondering when that question would come." Harry said grinning. "Don't worry; I'm not mad at you. Truthfully, I don't really know. I know that I was destroying myself with my self-hatred. I could feel it as well but I never thought I would be transformed into a

girl. The first few days were hell; I was too ashamed to go the bathroom or take a shower. Tonks had to threaten me each time."

## FLASHBACK

Tonks was watching Harry getting dressed as quickly as possible, trying not to look at himself while changing. She frowned when she noticed that he skipped taking a shower or even looking in the mirror. Now that she thought of it, he hadn't showered in several days. She decided to bring it up.

"Harry, when was the last time you took a shower?" Tonks asked him. She saw him panic like when he knew he was caught doing something he wasn't supposed to.

"Euhm, I don't know. Yesterday?" Harry evaded the question.

"You're a bad liar Harry." Tonks said narrowing her eyes. "Now tell me the truth."

"Fine, since we got here." Harry sighed loudly. He couldn't keep anything from Tonks. She was trained to spot when people lied and he had the worst poker face ever. She had told him that several times before.

"Well then, you'd better get that cute butt of yours into the shower." She said glaring at him. "And you better scrub everywhere or else."

"What if I don't want to take a shower?" Harry said defiantly. He knew he was being childish but couldn't help. He was too ashamed to look at himself in the mirror, so how could take a shower and wash himself?

"Then I guess I'll have to petrify you and wash you myself." Tonks smirked at seeing Harry's shocked face.

"You wouldn't?" he said in panic. Just then a spell impacted on the wall right next to him. A spell he recognized as the "Petrificus Totalus" and looked at a smirking Tonks.

"Is that a challenge I hear, Potter?" Tonks chuckled evilly. "Now, I'll give you to the count of three to get your behind in the shower and start scrubbing. I'll know it if you skipped parts."



"What are you going to do? Strip search me?" Harry said weakly already taking a step back.

"One." Tonks simply counted. "Better get going, Harry. Two, you don't want to be here when I reach three."

Tonks laughed inwardly as Harry sprinted to the bathroom and jumped out of his clothes and into the shower. Tonks felt a little bad for threatening him but it was time Harry got comfortable with his new body. She understood that he was embarrassed and uncomfortable the first few days but it became clear that Harry was stalling for time and ignoring the issue at hand.

Harry came out of the shower about fifteen minutes later looking very embarrassed. Tonks took pity on him and quickly grabbed him in a hug saying she was sorry for forcing him. She told him how proud she was and how much she loved him. It helped him calm down and she knew that in a few days he would be able to laugh about it.

END FLASHBACK

"It took a few more times before I even dared look at myself in the shower." Harry admitted. "It sounds crazy I know. Most guys our age would be eager to know what a naked girl looks like but it's something totally different when the first naked body of a girl you see is your own."

"And now?" Hermione asked.

"I'm okay with it." Harry admitted. "I slowly got used to seeing myself naked. Sure there were still some pretty uncomfortable moments later on but I got over it."

"Well, I for one think you doing great." Hermione said proud of her friend. "You're dealing with this so much better than I would. I don't know how I would react if I woke up as a guy."

"Yeah, that would be weird." Harry laughed. "But seriously, if it had been for Tonks I don't know how I would have survived so long. She supported me every step of the way. No matter how frustrated or

angry I got she never complained about anything. I owe so much to her for that."

"Sounds like she's a keeper." Hermione winked at him.

"Definitely. I've thought about it you know." Harry said. "I'm not sure when but I know that one day I'm going to marry her. There's no doubt about it."

"I'll be invited right?" Hermione smiled.

"Are you kidding?" Harry laughed. "You'll be my Maid of Honor. There's no one I'd rather have on my side then you 'Mione."

"Thank you Harry, that means a lot to me." Hermione said a small tear in her eye. "What do you say we stop getting all mushy and get some potions brewed?"

"Good idea." Harry agreed.

For the next few hours Hermione and Harry brewed and bottled several more cauldrons worth of potions. They had great fun and Hermione was impressed at how well Harry's potion turned out. They were all of very good quality, almost perfectly brewed. She was sure that if Harry did as well in his Potion class in Hogwarts he would have gotten O's everywhere. She sighed a bit as she would miss being at Hogwarts but her decision was made. She would stand by her friend like she had said she would and no one was going to change her mind.

Hundreds of miles away Albus Dumbledore just received mail from a house-elf that he recognized as Dobby. However, before he could ask where Harry was, the elf disappeared again. He should have stunned the elf but sadly his reflexes weren't what they used to be. When he unfolded the letter he noticed the handwriting and sank into his comfy chair in relief. Amelia Bones was alive. He quickly read the letter and was surprised at what he was reading.

Albus,

As I'm sure you are already aware, my house was attacked by none other than You-Know-Who himself. It was only by sheer luck and the help of a dear friend that Susan and I managed to escape. If we had

fled minutes later it would have been too late. I must that this dreadful event has me quite scared and shocked to say the least.

I want you to know that Susan and I are safe and well although I cannot tell you anything about our whereabouts and who helped us. It has been a most tiring last two days and I'm sure there are still many surprises waiting for me.

Onto more important matters, I've decided to take a more active stand against You-Know-Who and his minions. He dared attack me and my niece. That is something I cannot and will not forget nor forgive. A mutual acquaintance informed me of my popularity in the Ministry and advised me to run for Minister. After much contemplation I have decided to follow his advice. We cannot afford another Fudge or worse, one of You-Know-Who's lackey's to lead us through these troubled times.

It is by this letter that I formally announce my candidacy for Minister of Magic. Please inform the Wizengamot of this as you are back to being the Chief-Warlock. I will visit you at Hogwarts tomorrow at 10 o'clock in the morning to discuss my campaign.

Kind regards,

Amelia Bones.

Dumbledore put down the letter and put one of his famous lemon-drops in his mouth. This was great news to say the least. Amelia would be a fine Minister and he was sure that she would lead the Wizarding World well. He was curious about who had saved her but judging from the House-Elf that delivered the letter, he had an idea.

"Well Fawkes, it seems our young friend Harry has managed to impress me once more." Dumbledore said to his phoenix. The noble bird replied with a happy song before bursting into flames. It seemed his burning day had come early. Dumbledore looked at the little bird in the ashes and smiled. Fawkes had been a dear companion for many years and he was amazed each and every time at the rebirth of his friend.

Suddenly his fireplace flared up and a face appeared. It was a very distressed Remus who appeared and asked if he could pass

through to the his office. Dumbledore quickly granted him access and second later Remus tumbled out the fireplace.

"Remus, is something wrong?" Dumbledore said alerted.

"Albus, I just went to see the Grangers." Remus said in a hurry. "When I arrived there I noticed that everything was gone. The entire house had been emptied and no sign of Hermione and her parents."

"Curious." Dumbledore said stroking his long beard. "Take a seat Remus. Lemon-drop?"

"Didn't you hear me Albus?" Remus said not believing that the old man could be so calm.

"I assure you that my hearing is still in impeccable shape." Dumbledore smiled. "The Grangers are gone and the entire house is empty."

"Yes, do you have any idea what might have happened?" Remus asked again.

"Alas, I'm afraid not." Dumbledore answered. "But I'm having a few suspicions Remus. Oh yes, a few suspicions indeed."

"Care to enlighten me as well." Remus growled getting angry.

"No need to get angry Remus, I'll tell you." Dumbledore said calmly. "Just a few moments ago I received a letter from Amelia Bones. It seemed she was warned just before Voldemort attacked her house and managed to get away in time."

"That's good news Albus but what does this have to do with Hermione disappearing." Remus asked.

"In itself little but when one considers that her letter was delivered by a House-Elf named Dobby it becomes a whole other situation." Dumbledore smiled at the man.

"Dobby? That's Harry's friend isn't it?" Remus said jumping up from his chair. "The elf he freed from Malfoy?"

"Yes, that's right." Dumbledore nodded. "I've always been aware of the special bond that Harry and Dobby share and it wouldn't surprise me terribly if Dobby had agreed to work for Harry. Now let us reconsider the fact that Dobby delivered a letter addressed to me from Amelia. I can only conclude that Harry asked him to do so."

"Meaning that Harry is with Amelia." Remus finished.

"Perhaps. Or it's Amelia who's with Harry." Dumbledore said. "Either way, they have been or are in contact with each other. How and when this has happened I do not know as Harry disappeared almost two months ago. Did Harry ever tell you about meeting Amelia before?"

"No, not that I'm aware of." Remus said thinking a bit. "I only remember them meeting at the sham trial after Harry defended himself from those Dementors."

"Yes, I quite remember that as well." Dumbledore said. "I shall have to ask her when we meet tomorrow."

"Can I be here when you do?" Remus pleaded. "I need to know if he's safe."

"I guess I can allow that much." Dumbledore smiled at the man. "As to where Miss Granger has gone to, it suddenly makes a lot more sense if there's a House-Elf involved. Cleaning a house of its furniture is something that's easily done by them."

"You think Hermione and her parents are with Harry?" Remus asked him.

"I'm positive of it." Dumbledore nodded. "Somehow Harry has learned that Voldemort was starting to target specific people and he warned Amelia. Would it be so surprising that he contacted Miss Granger as well?"

"No, it wouldn't." Remus smiled in comprehension. "Thanks Albus, I'll let the others know. Hermione was supposed to come to Headquarters today and the Weasleys were quite worried about her. I'm sure they'll be pleased to hear that she's fine."

"Very well Remus, I'll see you tomorrow at ten to meet with Amelia." Dumbledore said activating the Floo-connection. "Give my regards to Molly and Arthur."

Remus stepped through the fireplace in Grimmauld Place only seconds later and was immediately bombarded with questions from all Weasleys. Ron and Ginny were shouting about their friends and where they could be, Molly was shouting about how worried she was for Hermione, and Harry of course as well, while Arthur was trying to calm the masses. When simply asking them to slow down and be quiet didn't work, Arthur went for his wand and silenced everyone but Remus.

"Now that everyone is done shouting, perhaps we can let Remus explain to us what he has learned." Arthur said calmly not bothering with the glares his wife and children gave him.

"Why, thank you Arthur." Remus grinned at the other man. "Most thoughtful of you I must say."

"Yes well, I asked it nicely but they refused to listen so now they'll pay the consequences." Arthur shrugged at Remus. "So before they regain their voices, tell us what you've learned."

Remus nodded and quickly explained what he and the Headmaster had learned and discussed. Arthur was relieved that Amelia was still alive as losing her would have meant a major blow to the light. He was well aware that she was a shoe in for the position of Minister and frankly he couldn't think of a better person for the job.

Molly was relieved to hear that Harry and Hermione were both okay even though they had vanished without a trace. She still worried but her heart and mind were eased now that she knew that both of them were alive and well. She would have preferred that they were here with her so she could keep an eye on them though. It wasn't that she didn't trust them but two teenagers alone was a recipe for trouble in her eyes.

Ron and Ginny were both relieved and somewhat mad. Harry and Hermione were together and they were having some kind of adventure without them. Ron felt very left out and his feelings of jealousy and lack of confidence in himself started to stir deep within his heart. Again Harry had chosen Hermione instead of him to have

some kind of adventure and have all the fun while he was stuck here in this old house without anything to occupy him. If he had to admit he was worried about how Harry and Hermione's relationship would change without him around.

While he was many things Ron was not a complete idiot. He could tell that Harry and Hermione were close, extremely close to each other. He doubted there were any romantic feelings involved but you never know how those things started. The two of them had always been close but after fourth year they had even gotten closer. The fact was, and he knew this all too well, that it was his own bloody fault too. He hadn't believed Harry when he was selected to be a Tri-Wizard Champion while Hermione trusted Harry and believed in him. Ever since that time, Ron had felt that the friendship he had with Harry had changed. They were still the best of friends but he knew that Harry had lost faith in him somewhat. It was faint but it was there.

What he feared the most was that those two would become romantically involved. While he would never admit it out loud, he had a crush on Hermione. It was weird as most time she did nothing but nag or boss him around about doing his homework and study for OWL's and NEWT's. He couldn't help but something about Hermione Granger attracted him to her and while he had yet to make a move so far, he felt somewhat scared to lose her to Harry. He had received a book from Fred and George on how to make a girl fall for you and he had planned to use the tips and tricks mentioned in the book this summer. Unfortunately, Hermione was now missing together with Harry.

Ginny was also steaming. She had a very personal interest in Harry and the fact that he was on some kind of vacation with Hermione didn't sit well with her. Not well at all. While she had grown out of the silly 'Boy-who-Lived' faze, she still had feelings for Harry. She had decided that he wasn't interested in her and at Hermione's advice to forget about him and date other guys, she had done just that. Currently she was seeing Dean Thomas and while a great guy and suitable boyfriend for now, he was no Harry Potter.

Ginny had often suspected that Harry and Hermione were either attracted to each other or worse, secretly in love with one another. When she had breached the subject with Hermione, the girl had denied everything saying they were just best friends. That didn't

make her feel better at all. She had heard the Muggle saying 'Best friends make the best spouses' before and looking at Harry and Hermione, that saying could have been made for them. Sure they argued or had differences of opinions every once in a while but they were far and between. There was nothing she could do however as she was stuck in this place and her mother wouldn't let them out of her sight for even a minute. The only thing they could do was wait until Hogwarts started and see what had happened.



## Chapter Eight: Meeting the Parents

When Tonks arrived at her parents' place she knew they would be waiting for her. Thanks to the Dobby Express they had been warned of her arrival that very morning. Her parents had known about their daughter's relationship with Harry and wholeheartedly approved of them dating once they saw and heard how happy Tonks was. Both Andromeda and Ted had known how hard it had been for Tonks while growing up as a Metamorphmagus. More than once they received letters stained with tears from when Tonks had been at Hogwarts. First, most of those tears were caused by children teasing her about her powers and her ever-changing appearance and during her teenage years because of her frustrations about boys always asking her to change the size of her breasts or to resemble some movie star or another celebrity.

It was no surprise for them that Tonks announced that she wouldn't be dating anyone who would ask her to change her appearance. She threw herself into her studies and focused her attention to becoming an Auror. Even there Tonks had to face the male attitudes and the frustrations that came with it. So when Tonks came home one summer evening saying she had met none other than Harry Potter and had become good friends, Andromeda and Ted had been rejoiced. Over the years they saw that friendship evolve into love and they knew that Tonks had fallen for her friend before she did. It was only a matter of time before it happened.

When Tonks came home during the Christmas holidays last year they immediately recognized the glow of a woman in love. It only took one second to figure out that Tonks and Harry had taken the leap and they couldn't be happier for them. They were well aware of the hardships Harry had to endure over the years and while they hadn't met yet, they felt like Harry was already part of their family by now. Naturally they were worried when Tonks contacted them early this summer with distressing news about Harry and how they had to go into hiding to protect him. They were worried even more when Tonks told them that they couldn't know where they were and all contact was to stop until later this summer. It was only Tonks' reassurance that they were both fine and out of danger that eased their hearts. Still, it had been a long and tiring summer for them.

When Andromeda woke up that morning she found a letter on the kitchen table and knew from the handwriting that it came from her

daughter. Nobody had such a chicken scratch for handwriting like her daughter. When she read that Tonks would come to get them she quickly woke her husband up and told him to start packing. Ted had jumped out of bed, removing his pajama pants in the process, and started packing everything he could get his hands on and into the suitcase. They had waited for several hours after that and both of them were nervous wrecks by now. Then they heard someone arrive on the front porch and Andromeda jumped up from her chair and opened the door before the person could even knock.

"Nymphadora, thank god you're okay." Andromeda said grabbing her only daughter in a hug. "We were so worried."

"Geez mother, give me a heart attack why don't you." Tonks said to her. "I told you we were safe."

"Don't give me that." Andromeda glared. "A mother always worries for her child. Besides, it wouldn't be the first time you lied to us."

"Now Andy, why don't let her get inside?" Ted said smiling at his daughter. "I'm sure she has a reason for all of this."

"Thanks Dad." Tonks said hugging him. "I'll tell you everything but not here. I came to get you so we could all go to a safe place. We'll talk once we're there so let's go."

"Wait, what about our suitcases?" Andromeda asked.

"Don't worry." Tonks smiled. "Dobby?"

A surprised Andromeda and Ted watched as an excited House-Elf appeared in front of them. They had heard about this Dobby before so they smiled when the Elf quickly took care of their suitcases and everything else in the house at Tonks' demand. Tonks thanked the Elf and asked her parents to grab hold of the Portkey she took out of her pocket. Trusting their daughter, Andromeda and Ted did just that and with a swirl of magic, the three Tonks' vanished from the house leaving it empty of all life.

When Tonks had led her parents into the building she could tell both of them were dying to find out what had happened over the past few weeks. She quickly promised to tell them everything once they reached the top floor and hit the elevator button. After the initial

shock of seeing the luxurious apartment Tonks told them everything. It did take far less time than the explanation she had to give the day before as her parents knew everything about her relationship with Harry. Still, it took her about two hours to get everything explained and see the memory from the night of Harry's transformation. Andromeda and Ted listened calmly to their daughter's words but even they were shocked at what they heard. When Tonks finished both of them were left with dozens of questions.

"So Harry's a girl now?" Ted asked again.

"Yes Dad, like you saw in the memory." Tonks nodded.

"And you're sure this transformation is permanent?" He further asked.

"From what we know and learned then yes, it's a permanent change." Tonks nodded. "Harry's body has completely transformed; both inside and outside. He might as well be born a girl."

"And you're okay with this?" Andromeda said weakly.

"I'm not abandoning Harry if that's what you mean Mother?" Tonks said angry. "I love Harry, and while it took some adjustments for both of us, it doesn't matter to me if he's a boy or a girl. I love Harry and nothing is going to change that."

"I'm sorry Nymphadora; I didn't mean it that way." Andromeda said quickly. "I just wanted to know how you felt about all of this. I know you wouldn't leave Harry and I would never suggest it either. The two of you are good together and I'm pleased you have found him, er her?"

"Oh sorry mum, I thought you meant something else." Tonks said sitting down. "And yes, it felt somewhat strange at the beginning but we adapted and honestly, I love Harry just as much now, if not more than before. It's strange but this incident brought us even closer together. It was tough but we made it and our love is stronger than ever."

"That's good to hear." Ted said smiling at his only daughter. "How did Harry take it?"

"Pretty much how you would expect." Tonks said. "He panicked and freaked at first but who could blame him for that? In the beginning he had trouble getting used to his new body and he was very embarrassed about it. I had to force him to take showers and the likes. Now it seems kind of funny but at the time it was very hard on him. It took a week or two but he slowly got used to it and now he's comfortable looking at himself in the mirror. Still doesn't like to be addressed as a girl though."

"Like you said, who could blame him for that?" Andromeda said.

"Can we meet him?" Ted asked.

"Of course you can meet him." Tonks smiled. "Come on, I'm sure he's in the training room or brewing another potion."

Along the way Tonks encountered the Grangers, Susan and Amelia and told them to join the tour. The four quickly agreed and once introductions were made, the group followed Tonks downstairs. She gave them about the same tour as Harry had given Hermione and they were all very impressed with what they had seen so far. When they came into the Potion Lab, Tonks quickly went over to Harry, who was busy brewing a Blood-Replenishing Potion with Hermione.

"Hi beautiful, I'm back." Tonks said before she grabbed him and kissed him.

"Hi, everything go well?" Harry asked once the kiss ended. He then looked behind Tonks and saw everyone smiling at him, including two new faces. "You must be Tonks' parents? It's good to finally meet you in person." Harry said bravely. He was still not used to being around new people in his new body.

"It's very nice to meet you too Harry." Ted said stepping forward. "Nymphadora told us a lot about you too. I want to thank you for taking such good care of her."

"Oh no sir, it's she who takes care of me." Harry said embarrassed. "She's the greatest. I don't know how I would have survived the last few months without her."

"Hello Harry, it's good to finally meet the one who makes my daughter so happy." Andromeda said hugging Harry gently. "Thank

you for doing that. I know you must be worried how we feel about your current change but I want you to know that Ted and I are fine with it. All that matters to us is that you and Nymphadora are happy. The rest doesn't matter to us."

"Thank you Ma'am." Harry said relaxing a bit.

"None of that Harry, you're practically part of our family now." Ted said smiling. "You can call us Ted and Andy. No need for any of that sir or ma'am stuff."

"My husband is right, Harry." Andromeda said. "Now how about we get to know each other a bit better of tea? I'm sure I could tell you some good stories about Nymphadora's youth."

"Mother, don't you dare and stop calling me that." Tonks said dragging Harry away from her mother eager to stop the embarrassment. "Honestly, you always try to embarrass me in front of people."

Harry and the rest laughed at that and they all agreed to take a break so they could get to know each other a bit better. Seeing that they would all be living here for the foreseeable future, they thought it best to get introductions out of the way right away. The afternoon was spent telling stories and Harry had a marvelous time. Tonks held him in her arms the entire time and often placed some soft kisses, letting him know just how much she loved him. Harry felt truly happy and none of them seemed to be bothered that he was a girl now. It seemed all of them had accepted and knew that what had happened wasn't his choice and knew not to comment or ask questions about it for now.

"I'm telling you, the first time we saw Nymphadora changing the color of her hair into that dreadful pink, we both practically fainted. "Ted laughed loudly. "She was about four years old and changed her hair because she wanted it to be the same as her doll. We first thought it was some bout of accidental magic but when she started to change it into other colors later on we knew something was up. It was both cute and horrifying seeing a four year old running around with pink hair."

"Geez Dad, thanks for telling that one to everyone." Tonks muttered.

"Would you prefer if we showed them some of your baby pictures?" her mother slyly asked.

"NO, anything but that." Tonks shouted quickly.

"Oh come on love, I'm sure you were the cutest baby ever." Harry said laughing.

"Don't." Tonks said to her mother. "I swear, if you bring out the pictures, I'll pull out that memory and show everyone what I saw when I was nine. I'm not kidding."

"Fine, I won't show them the pictures." Andromeda said quickly. "But no showing that memory either."

"Deal." Tonks grinned victoriously.

"Darn it, I really wanted to see those pictures of baby Tonks." Harry complained.

"I'll show some of them to you later." Tonks whispered in his ear. "But just you and only the ones I don't mind."

Harry nodded and kissed her in thanks. He then stood up and pulled Tonks up as well saying that they still had to their exercises for the day. Tonks nodded saying that everyone was welcome to join them but only Susan and Hermione were interested. The five others were perfectly happy staying in the living room talking and getting to know each other further. Harry and Tonks led Susan and Hermione to the lower levels and quickly explained what kind of exercises they would be doing today.

"We switch every day." Tonks explained. "One day we run, the next day we swim. Then we practice martial arts and meditate to learn Occlumency. It's tough when you start but after a bit it becomes great fun and you feel bad when you don't do the exercises. Today we're swimming so we need to get changed into our bathing suits."

"But Susan and I don't have our bathing suit with us." Hermione said. "I guess we could look for them as everything was brought here."

"Don't worry about that." Harry said. "I'm sure we have a few spares around."

The four of them went to the basement where a huge pool was located. If Hermione had to guess it was the size of an Olympic pool and she wondered how many tracks she would be able to do until she had to stop. Susan's jaw dropped too as she had never seen such a big pool before. Harry and Tonks gave them some spare bathing suits and told them they could change in the adjourned cubicles. Five minutes later the four of them stood at the side of the pool.

Harry and Tonks were both wearing matching one piece bathing suits and Hermione had to agree with Susan's words from yesterday. Harry did make one stunningly beautiful girl. The bathing suit she was wearing was dark blue and fitted perfectly to her body. It showed the curves of her body and Hermione felt a little jealous and insecure next to him. Tonks was something different all together as she could pose a one of those models in magazines with her toned and tanned body. Harry seemed to notice Hermione's unease and complimented her as well.

"Hermione, you look great." He said meaning every word of it.

"Harry's right, you shouldn't be ashamed or insecure." Tonks hugged the girl. "You look fantastic and I'm sure that if the boys at Hogwarts could see you now they would trip over their jaws. Susan, you look beautiful as well."

"Thanks Tonks, I'm a bit unsure about the bathing suit but I like it." Susan smiled. "So, what's the plan?"

"Right, since you two are new to this and only just starting, its better that you take it at your own pace." Tonks said. "Harry and I do about fifty laps, and then take a break before doing another fifty laps." She laughed at both Hermione and Susan looked horrified. "Don't worry, you just do what you can and remember to stretch well before starting. We don't want you to get a cramp in the middle of the pool."

Once they done the necessary stretches Harry and Tonks dove right in and started their laps. Susan shrugged and jumped right in as well before slowly swimming to the other side. Hermione followed as well and dove into the water. She and Susan did several laps until they had to take a short break where they both complimented each other.

"Really Hermione, Tonks is right." Susan said. "You're quite beautiful if you discard all those layers of clothes you wear. You should show off more."

"Thanks Susan, it's just that I don't want people to like me just because of my body." Hermione thanked the girl. "I want them to like me for my intelligence and who I am as well, you know? I always figured that if they could see beyond the bossy know-it-all, book-loving person, they would deserve to be my friend."

"And how many have succeeded in that little test?" Susan asked knowingly.

"So far not many." Hermione admitted. "Harry did but that's no surprise. Ron, well not quite judging from his comments in fourth year."

"Yeah I heard about that debacle." Susan said. "Don't get me wrong, I think Ron isn't all that bad but he sure needs to grow up a little bit. You do know he has a crush on you don't you?"

"I figured as much." Hermione sighed. "He has a weird way of showing it though."

"Are you interested in him?" Susan asked.

"No, I don't think so." Hermione answered honestly. "Like you said, Ron is a great guy but he's not the one for me. I like him as my friend but nothing more. We wouldn't work out at all; sometimes it takes all of my patience and self-control not to hex him where he stands. He can be quite infuriating at times."

"Boys, they're so weird sometimes." Susan laughed.

"I bet they say the same thing about girls." Hermione joined her in laughing. "Up for another lap or two?"

"Lead the way." Susan nodded and followed Hermione back into the pool.

Once Harry and Tonks had finished their laps, they dragged Susan and Hermione into the training room and changed into their outfits. Harry and Tonks quickly showed some moves to the girls saying



that they could practice on their own for now and once they finished their training, both would receive some one-on-one instructions.

Susan and Hermione watched as their friends moved through their exercise and had a sparring match. They were very impressed and they were both eager to learn. Harry then took Hermione apart while Tonks would teach Susan the basics. They started with a light stretching exercise since being agile was important to both disciplines they would be learning. After that they moved on to showing the girls how to punch and kick correctly.

"Nice job 'Mione." Harry complimented her. "Be sure to pay attention to your wrist. You don't want to bend it the wrong way while punching and break it. Why don't we move on to the sandbag?"

"Okay, sounds great." Hermione said sweating already from the training.

"Alright, what I want you to do is punch the bag as long as you can." Harry explained. "Pay attention to the right form of your body and wrist. Don't worry about hitting hard for now; this exercise is to make your body learn the correct movements. It's called muscle memory."

"I read about that." Hermione nodded and she quoted something from a book. "When a movement is repeated over time, a long-term muscle memory is created for that task; eventually allowing it to be performed without conscious effort."

"Exactly, it's like riding a bike." Harry nodded while grinning at her. "We learn how to do it and in the beginning we have to pay attention. After a while though it becomes so routine that we don't have to think about the different processes that riding a bike consists of. That's what we're trying to accomplish here. So go on, try it."

Hermione nodded and slowly punched the bag only to wince as she felt how hard the bag really was. She looked over at Harry and saw that he was motioning her to keep going. Not wanting to disappoint her friend she continued until she could no longer punch. She felt very relieved when Harry told her it was okay to stop now.

"Harder than it looks, right?" Harry smiled.

"Yeah, I thought that it wouldn't be that bad." Hermione said looking at her bleeding knuckles. "This is painful."

"I know but it's necessary." Harry said knowingly. "I felt the same way but according to Muggle Martial Arts books it really useful to harden the knuckles and skin. It makes you less sensitive to feel pain when you hit someone. Don't worry about scars or anything; Tonks will heal you right up."

"Thanks Harry, I enjoyed the lesson so far." Hermione smiled at him. "I look forward to learning Occlumency as well. I found it really fascinating but couldn't find any books on it."

Tonks, who had come over to treat Hermione's hands, chuckled and commented on her statement. "That's not really surprising as Occlumency is somewhat considered Dark Magic. It's not of course but those idiots at the Ministry think everything that's too hard for them is Dark or evil."

"Is it that hard to learn?" Hermione asked.

"It's a discipline of the mind and as such the results aren't visible immediately." Tonks shrugged. "Not many Witches or Wizards have the patience or mental capabilities to grasp the true extent of Occlumency. Most give up after a while, thinking that they're wasting their time. The advantages of knowing Occlumency however are well worth the effort."

"Such as?" Hermione asked wanting to know more.

"For one, it protects the mind from outside interference." Tonks said giving her an example. "Someone who knows Occlumency is less likely to fall for magic that deals with the mind. It's not an absolute defense or anything but it makes breaking the charm or magic easier. Other advantages include being able to control your emotions during times of stress or duress, being able to retain information more easily and so on. It's really a very useful thing to know."

"What about Leglimency?" Hermione asked.

"Ah now that's a whole other story." Tonks said sitting down. "While Occlumency protects the mind, Leglimency invades it. It can be

used both for good and bad. People who know Leglimency, like Voldemort or Dumbledore, are capable of reading the minds of people. Don't think they can read a mind like a book or anything. It's more like they can see flashes of what you're thinking about at the very moment. They can search for a specific memory or emotion."

"That's what Prof. Snape did to Harry." Hermione realized. "Harry told me he felt like Prof. Snape was searching for bad memories and thoughts."

"Yes that's true but Leglimency is capable of much more than that." Tonks nodded. "It's also capable of planting ideas or thoughts into the mind of those they're invading. Like Voldemort did with Harry; when he planted the dreams of that corridor in the Department of Mysteries. Leglimency might not be able to directly influence the victim but it can make them act in certain ways. They could plant an idea or thought and the victim would believe it's his or her own idea."

"That's scary." Hermione breathed.

"Indeed it is and that's why Harry and I are working on Occlumency." Tonks said motioning to Harry, who was already sitting in the meditation garden. "Harry has gotten pretty good at it although he used to fall asleep all the time."

"Yeah, he told me that as well." Hermione chuckled.

Just then Susan joined them as well and after Tonks healed her hands, she explained what the purpose of meditation was. It was to allow them to clear their mind of everything and all thoughts. Tonks spent half an hour explaining and then went to sit next to Harry. Susan and Hermione sat down as well and tried to meditate as well. Both of them had trouble and neither of them managed to achieve much. Harry smiled at them saying that at least they didn't fall asleep like he did the first time.

Once they had showered the four of them joined the other again and spent the rest of the evening relaxing and talking. Harry had given one of the books he had been reading to Hermione much to Tonks' displeasure. She couldn't say anything about it though as Hermione hadn't been into the library to get it. Still, she made Harry promise to make it up to her. Hermione blushed furiously when she heard some

of the suggestions Tonks was making to Harry. She really didn't want to hear that about two of her closest friends.

The next morning Amelia and the rest were having breakfast in Harry's kitchen. They had all decided that they would always have breakfast in Harry's kitchen together. Amelia was getting ready for her meeting with Dumbledore and was busy working out the last kinks in her theories and explanations. She had no doubt Dumbledore would ask about Harry and so she needed to be sure she got her story straight.

She disliked the man somewhat because she felt like he was stuck in his old ways. It was nothing personal but she felt that the Wizarding World needed to advance. Dumbledore however, while agreeing to some point, preferred to keep things the way they were and that bothered her. Sure, some things like keeping the Wizarding World separate from the Muggle World would never disappear and perhaps that was for the best but small things could help both worlds to new levels.

Amelia was much more aware of the Muggle World than the average Witch or Wizard and she marveled at the technologies the Muggles had invented. Technology like computers and the internet, things that had started getting widely accepted and known throughout the Muggle World, had so much potential. Yes, the Muggle systems wouldn't be able to function in their world but the ideas were more than enough to inspire her.

Unfortunately, the Wizarding World was a stagnate place. People feared change and disliked things they didn't understand. It was enough to ensure that the British Wizarding World was behind in just about everything. She had been to the continent and the colonies only to witness just how far ahead those countries were. There at least, Witches and Wizards didn't stick out as sore thumbs while being in the Muggle World. They were well aware of the Muggle World and how things worked. In Britain, a pureblood wouldn't know how to dress as a Muggle if his life depended on it.

Often she, and others who thought like her, had tried to appeal to their leaders and the Wizengamot in order to slowly learn about the Muggle World. It was all for naught as the only course on Muggles and their world was taught at Hogwarts by a pureblood that had never been to the Muggle World before. It was enough to infuriate

her. She had hoped that Dumbledore, who was being considered the Champion of the Muggleborns, would see it her way but he didn't. He always told her that change needed time and that it would happen on its own. Amelia snorted at this. She knew well enough that so far nothing had changed.

Sighing she got ready and asked if Dobby could 'pop' her to Hogwarts. The excited elf told her it was no trouble and happily took if with Amelia in tow. She blinked when she saw the gates of Hogwarts right in front of her and thanked the little elf for bringing her.

"Mrs. Bonesy is only needing to call Dobby when she leaves castle." Dobby said to her. "Dobby will hear and come to be picking you up."

"Thank you Dobby that's very kind of you." Amelia said giving him a sickle for his trouble. Apparently this was quite a lot and the elf happily bounced around thanking her. Amelia smiled and bid her goodbye entering the castle gates. She knew Dumbledore would be aware of her arrival now that she had passed wards so she wasn't surprised to see McGonagall waiting for her.

"Hello Minerva, it's good seeing you up and about again." Amelia greeted her friend.

"It'll take more than a few stunners from a toad to keep me down. It's good to see you too, Amelia." The Scottish woman said. "When I heard the news of the attack I was very worried. I'm glad see you're doing well."

"I do have Miss Tonks and Mr. Potter to thank for that." Amelia said. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here right now. We missed You-Know-Who by a mere ten minutes."

"How are they?" Minerva inquired. "Is Miss Granger alright?"

"You can relax Minerva, everyone's fine." Amelia reassured her friend. "I'm not at liberty to discuss anything but you can rest assured that they are well protected and safe."

"Thank Merlin for that." Minerva relaxed. "I know I shouldn't show favoritism but those two are some of the brightest students I've ever seen. If only Mr. Potter could stay out of trouble long enough, I'm

sure he would have marvelous grades just like his parents. Of course; most of the times trouble finds him and not the other way around."

"From what I've seen over the last few days I have to agree with you." Amelia smirked knowingly. "He's quite the able lad."

Minerva nodded and led her friend to the Headmaster's office. Once she gave the password she said her goodbye's telling her friend that they would need to catch up later, something which Amelia happily agreed to. Hopefully Dumbledore wouldn't ruin her day for her with his stubbornness.

Amelia didn't bother to knock on the door as she damn well knew that he was aware of her presence. She barged in and greeted the man. "Good morning to you Albus." Amelia said before turning to a third person in the room. "Remus Lupin, it's been a while since we've last seen each other."

"So it has Mrs. Bones." Remus nodded with a smile. "I believe the last time was when we faced down those Death Eaters down at Knockturn Alley in '79."

"Yes, I quite remember that particular evening." Amelia said mournfully. That night several of her colleagues and friends had perished when they got ambushed by a group of Death Eaters. If it wasn't for Dumbledore and his group she would have died as well but they managed to arrive in time and force the Death Eaters to flee. She shook her head clear of the sad and painful memories and focused on the present and the future. "Enough about that, let's get to business."

## Chapter Nine: Start of a new Ministry

Amelia Bones was currently sitting in the Headmaster's office waiting for their meeting to start. She had prepared enough arguments with which she hoped to get Dumbledore on her side. While a bit reluctant, she did agree to compete for the spot of Minister of Magic and she decided that that if she got the position she would do it right. She did know however that to become Minister she needed to get the right people to support her. Harry, now being the Hero of the Wizarding World, was one of them. The old man in front of her another one. Now that Remus had left she and Albus could begin the real meeting.

"So Amelia, I must confess that I was quite surprised when you wrote to me about becoming Minister of Magic." Dumbledore said. "I thought you were satisfied to be Director and had no ambition to become Minister."

"And until a few days ago, you would be right." Amelia quickly answered. "If Voldemort hadn't attacked my home I would have said no to that particular promotion. That madman however dared to attack me at my own home and that's something I'm not willing to neither forget nor forgive."

"Yes you said as much in your letter." Dumbledore nodded. "But I feel that there's something else that convinced you as well, am I right?"

"Can't hide much from you can we?" Amelia snorted. "Very well, it was Mr. Potter who convinced me that it was the right thing to do. After the screw-up that was Fudge we need to prepare for the worst and a weak Minister or someone Voldemort appoints is not an answer."

"You finally said his name." Dumbledore said surprised. "If anything that alone shows me you're serious about this."

"I've been shown how silly being afraid of name can be." Amelia said somewhat embarrassed. "If sixteen year old boys and girls can call him by his name then I should be able to do so as well. I refuse to bow down to that man ever again."

"Excellent, what are your plans for the Ministry?" Dumbledore said impressed.

"Thanks to Fudge we lost an entire year so we need to get busy right away." Amelia said launching into her plans. "Mind you, I don't have any concrete plans but it's a start. First of all, we need to get every Death Eater or supporter of Voldemort out of the Ministry. I will not have such men or women in my employ."

"Commendable but very difficult to achieve I'm afraid." Dumbledore nodded. "Voldemort's supporters have ways and some of them are in high places."

"Then we take out those we can and worry about the rest later." Amelia moved on. "Secondly, I want the Auror Force to get a crash course of training by Moody. He'll get them up to task in no time, I'm sure of that. Then we can work on training new ones."

"Moody will be delighted to whip them into shape." Dumbledore said knowing his old friend. "He did always say the new Aurors needed a harsher training environment."

"I'm also issuing an order for use of deadly force." Amelia said knowing this was one of the points she and Dumbledore would disagree. "It's time to fight fire with fire. I will not allow innocent men and women to be killed in the line of duty because they weren't allowed to fight back with equal weapons."

"Amelia, surely there's another way." Dumbledore protested.

"No, there's not Albus." Amelia stood her ground. "I understand why you're hesitant on this, and frankly so was I at the beginning but we need to address this problem right now. We can't afford to hold back while fighting Death Eaters."

"But think about the deaths it would cause." Dumbledore said once more.

"That's exactly what I'm doing in the first place." Amelia said strongly. "If we let Death Eaters get away with murder and rape, then the amount of victims will only increase in time. If we act immediately we can limit the damage done to the people of the Wizarding World."



"But.." Dumbledore tried again but Amelia interrupted him.

"No Albus, I refuse to budge on this." She glared at him. "You know how bad the situation is already, if we let Death Eaters have free reign than we are doomed. I'm not suggesting we kill each and every one of them either. I'm talking about responding with deathly force during an attack, if for example we move onto Death Eaters ourselves we could try and catch them alive."

"I had hoped to keep the casualties under wraps this time." Dumbledore slumped into his chair.

"I know and while I hoped the same thing, you and I both know it's not possible." Amelia sighed. "Besides, isn't it you who said that we should do what is right instead of what is easy?"

Dumbledore blinked and then started chuckling loudly. "I remember saying those words to Mr. Potter not so long ago. It seems that I should follow my own advice from time to time."

"Indeed, it does." Amelia said. "Now, will you support me?"

"Yes Amelia, you have my full support." Dumbledore nodded with a smile.

"Thank you, then I'll keep you informed of my plans for our world." Amelia said relieved. "We've got a lot of work ahead of us and sadly very little time to do it in. We'll need to be ready for when Voldemort comes for us. Any idea on when that will be?"

"Unfortunately no." Dumbledore said. "I've put a few feelers out there and from what they have learned, he's still gathering his army. Because he had little or no resistance last year, he managed to get several of the Giant Tribes to join him, as well as a few Werewolf and Vampire Clans."

"Damn that Fudge." Amelia said angry. "He might as well have given the key to the Ministry to Voldemort. How are we going to fight such an army?"

"Honestly, I'm starting to think that doing things your way is the only thing we can do." Dumbledore said stroking his beard. "We should be lucky that the Goblins have decided to stay neutral this time. We

can only hope that they don't change their mind."

"Merlin forbids." Amelia gasped. "If we had to face such adversaries as well, we're doomed to lose from the start. Who do we have on our side?"

"Most of the Wizengamot members are light oriented." Dumbledore thought loudly. "Families of known Death Eaters excluded of course. There are several families that have opted to stay neutral as well for the time being. If we manage to get them on our side, we should be in the clear."

"Very well, when should I make my appearance at the Ministry?" Amelia asked him.

"The sooner, the better." Dumbledore explained. "People are starting to get antsy and some of them are already trying to draw more power to themselves. We can't afford not to have a Minister for too long. I suggest you show up for the Wizengamot meeting tomorrow afternoon. We'll be making Cornelius' removal as Minister of Magic official then."

"Understood, I'll see you there." Amelia said getting up.

"Before you go, can you give me some information on Mr. Potter's whereabouts?" Dumbledore asked. "I'm worried that he's not securely protected wherever he is."

"Mr. Potter is perfectly safe where he is, Albus." Amelia said anticipating the questioning about Harry. "I'm sorry to say that I'm not at the liberty to tell you where he is or what he's doing with you."

"Please Amelia, you have no idea how important Harry is to the war effort." Dumbledore tried again. "If anything happens to him, that'll be the end of it all."

"Surely you're not referring to that drivel the Daily Prophet is spreading around." Amelia said to him. "The rumors that Mr. Potter is the one? I've heard about this prophecy before but I suppose I won't get you to reveal its contents to me?"

"For all our sakes I cannot." Dumbledore nodded.

"I thought as much." Amelia said. "Sorry Albus, but Mr. Potter has no intention to come out of hiding as of yet. I'm sure he'll contact you once the time is right. Focus on preparing for the war for now. I'm sure Mr. Potter will be there when he's required."

Amelia left the office and went in search of Minerva as they had some catching up to do. She knew that Dumbledore must have several more questions about Harry but she wasn't about to answer them. She owed Harry her life and more importantly, the life of her niece so she wasn't about to betray him. Reaching the door of Minerva's quarters she knocked and smiled when the door opened and Minerva invited her in.

While Amelia was meeting with Dumbledore and McGonagall, Harry, Tonks, Susan and Hermione were getting up as well. Susan and Hermione were hurting all over from the exercises they had done the previous day and groaned loudly when Harry said that they would do the exact same thing again today.

"Now girls, no complaining." Tonks smirked. "This is what training is all about. You'll see, soon you'll be wanting for more."

"I doubt it." Susan said rubbing her sore legs and arms.

"Alright, let's do some laps to get the blood pumping." Harry said happily before he started running.

"How can she be so energetic this early?" Hermione wondered looking at her friend before they too started running albeit much slower.

"Oh you have no idea how energetic Harry is in the morning." Tonks laughed with a look on her face that explained just what she meant by that.

"Ew Tonks, I don't need to hear about you and Harry doing that." Hermione said blushing.

"Me and Tonks doing what?" Harry asked as she just passed the girls.

"Nothing." Hermione said quickly pushing Harry further in front of her. "Nothing for you to worry about, keep on running." Harry shrugged and raced off with a laughing Tonks right on her heels.

"I'll bet you anything that the only reason she's running behind Harry is to look at her bum." Susan laughed.

"Please stop putting pictures in my head." Hermione groaned loudly. She sighed as she watched Tonks pinch Harry's butt before storming off with Harry chasing her, yelling loudly.

"Those two really love each other." Susan said softly. "I kind of envy Tonks, you know."

"How so?" Hermione asked.

"Sure, their relationship is somewhat strange and weird but look at them." Susan said looking at the laughing Harry and Tonks. "Their friendship evolved into love and both of them would give up everything to keep the other happy. Tonks stood by Harry throughout everything and Harry loves Tonks for who she is, and not for what she is or who she can be. They're both so incredibly lucky to have each other."

"I guess I understand what you mean." Hermione said. "Knowing that there's one person you can count on no matter what happens, must be such a relief. We can only hope to find someone like that."

"I'm sure we will." Susan smiled brightly. "But for now let's do our laps and make sure Harry and Tonks make it through this war. Both of them deserve to have a happily ever after, don't you think?"

"Got it." Hermione smiled. "Besides, Harry needs as much protecting as she can get. A real magnet for trouble she is."

Half an hour later Susan and Hermione were ready to collapse where they stood. They had been running for over half an hour already and Harry and Tonks showed no intention of stopping any time soon. Hermione and Susan were breathing heavily and were holding their sides in pain when thankfully Tonks called the running to an end.

"Okay, keep walking but don't stop moving." Tonks warned them.  
"Walk until you catch your breath."

For the next few minutes the four of them walked until they got their breath back and then stopped altogether. Harry distributed some energy drinks for them and then told them to get changed into their martial arts' clothes for the next part of training.

"Already? I just managed to catch my breath." Hermione said not believing her friends' words.

"Relax, the hard part is over." Harry said.

"Really?" Susan asked happily.

"Nope, just kidding." Harry grinned. "That was just to warm up our muscles, now comes the fun part."

"You're evil." Hermione glared at her but Harry just laughed and walked up to the mat where Tonks was waiting.

For the next hour Susan and Hermione were submitted to learning how to throw punches and kicks. They learned how to grab an opponent and toss them over their shoulders or held them into a grip that could break wrists, elbows and shoulders if you put enough pressure on the bones. On top of that they themselves were tossed over shoulders and hips by Tonks and Harry more than a few dozen times. When Susan asked why they needed to learn martial arts, Harry decided that an example was necessary.

"Okay Susan, you're a Death Eater." Harry said creating a scene for them. "I'm your victim and I'm unarmed while you have your wand." Tonks quickly gave her a fake wand to use. "You're trying to curse me and seeing as I'm unarmed you're pretty confident in yourself."

"Okay I'm with you so far." Susan nodded.

"Good, now I want you to pronounce the spell just like you would be casting it for real." Harry explained. "Doesn't matter what spell."

"Okay." Susan said in understanding. "ExpelliaRGH....."

Before Susan could even finish her incantation Harry had jumped forward, grabbing her wrist with one hand and twisted it around. It was enough for Susan to let her fake wand drop to the floor. Harry twisted a little harder and she fell down to one knee from the pain she felt. Only when she felt something press at her forehead did she open her eyes, only to see the tip of the fake wand between her eyes.

"Like you just saw, I disarmed you before you could even finish your spell." Harry said, letting go of Susan's wrist. "When Witches or Wizards lose their wand, most of them are practically defenseless. I could easily overpower you just by twisting your wrist and while it is true that most Witches and Wizards don't get that close during a fight or duel, it might save your life one day."

"I see, thanks Harry." Susan smiled. "I guess we still have much to learn."

"Don't worry about it." Harry smiled at her. "I've only learned how to do this a few weeks ago and like you, Tonks had to show me just how useful it could be in a fight."

The rest of the morning the four women spent by meditating. At least that was what Harry and Tonks did. Hermione and Susan were trying not to fall asleep during the time they sat there. Once Harry called the exercise to an end, Hermione was frustrated that she wasn't able to meditate correctly.

"Relax 'Mione, you're too tense." Tonks said. "You can't expect to learn something like meditation from the get go. It takes time and practice. I'm sure you'll get the hang of it soon enough."

"Yeah, at least you didn't fall asleep with drool running down your chin." Harry quipped. "That was how I did the first time."

"I know but I really want to learn Occlumency." Hermione said. "It sounds so interesting and useful. I can't wait to start building my shields and such."

Hermione then went on to tell them what she had learned on Occlumency. The rest just laughed at seeing Hermione in her element and half listened and half ignored her. When they reached

the apartment they all went to take a shower as it was almost lunch time.

Harry walked into her room and promptly took off her top and pants, parading around in her underwear before taking a towel. She turned on the shower and jumped under it, enjoying the hot water running down her body. The water did wonders for her sore muscles and she started massaging her arms and legs to help with the soreness. Once she was done she grabbed the bottle of shower gel and started washing herself.

While she wasn't embarrassed about it now, she was mortified the first few times she took a shower. It was all so strange and new at the time and she felt somewhat like a pervert when she had to wash those places. Now however, she had accepted the truth and had no trouble taking showers.

Suddenly the shower curtain was pulled to a side and a grinning Tonks entered the shower. She grabbed the sponge Harry was using from her hands and applied a bit more shower gel to it. Harry watched at her girlfriend, wondering what was going on.

"I'm hurt, Harry." Tonks said pouting. "How come you didn't wait for me? You know how much I enjoy our shower time together."

"Eh, I guess I forgot?" Harry said sheepishly. "Besides, it's almost time for lunch so we don't have the time for that kind of thing."

"You forgot?" Tonks said not believing her words. "Well, then I should help you remember why we love showering together."

"Tonks..." Harry said before Tonks placed her lips on hers, effectively shutting her up. She groaned as she felt her breasts push against her and her hands roaming over her body. Tonks didn't stop and continued to kiss her and pushed her against the wall of the shower. Her hands were now firmly holding her butt and she squeezed it softly, earning another groan of pleasure from Harry. Suddenly Tonks broke the kiss and grabbed the sponge again before she started washing Harry.

With skillful hands she soaped her up, paying special attention to the special areas. Every once in awhile she kissed the skin and she smirked as she saw Harry tremble in pleasure. She reached up to

her again and kissed him while her left hand wondered south. When she reached her destination she slipped a finger inside and smiled in the kiss when she felt Harry react to her touch. Her other hand grabbed Harry's hand and guided her inside her as well.

Slowly both started moving their hips and fingers trying to bring pleasure and release to the other. It didn't take long before both achieved their climax and they slumped down in the shower, both enjoying the afterglow. Harry pulled Tonks close and gently kissed her on the lips a few times.

"That's was wonderful." Tonks said to her lover.

"Y-yeah it was." Harry said still recovering from the heightened feelings. "I love you, Nymphadora Tonks."

"And I love you Harry James Potter." Tonks smiled back. "But don't you dare tell anyone that I let you call me by my first name or else..."

"I won't." Harry chuckled. "We should get cleaned up and go downstairs. I'm sure they're waiting for us by now."

"I don't care; I needed to spend some private time with you." Tonks shrugged. "They can think whatever they want; I just needed to be held by the one I love."

"Even though he's a girl now." Harry sighed.

"Don't." Tonks warned him. "You know I don't care about that. You're my Harry, the one I fell in love with and will love for the rest of my life and beyond. It doesn't matter to me if you're a boy or a girl. I love you and nothing will change that."

"I know but it's still hard sometimes." Harry nodded. "I sometime find myself thinking like a girl already, and it scares me. At times I feel so comfortable in this body and it makes me wonder, you know?"

"I understand but maybe that's because you're unconsciously accepted the change?" Tonks said to him. "Maybe it's time to start thinking of yourself not as a boy who became a girl but as a girl tout court?"



"I guess." Harry nodded standing up. "I'll try to do it your way but don't expect me to suddenly enjoy shopping or talking gossip with you."

"I can live with that." Tonks said passing a towel. "Come on, let's get dressed. I'm starving."

When they got to the dining room, everyone was waiting for them. Both Harry and Tonks had to endure quite a bit of teasing before lunch got on the way. They took it in good stride and laughed as well at some of the teasing. Tonks however did say they could have started without them but Emma said it would be disrespectful to start eating with the hosts not there yet.

"So, what do you have planned this afternoon?" Hermione said suddenly. "Please don't tell me there's more physical training to do."

"No, that part is over." Tonks laughed. "We usually work on spell knowledge and learning new spells. Also, we brew a few potions as well. It's pretty calm in the afternoon."

"Thank Merlin for small favors." Susan sighed happily. "I'm going to be sore for days."

"Don't worry, it will pass soon enough." Harry said. "No, I was thinking that we could work on learning new spells and silent casting."

"That's sixth year material." Hermione said excited but then deflated. "Shame we can't cast magic to practice."

"Oh, I wouldn't be too sure about that." Tonks grinned mischievously.

"Tell me." Hermione wanted to know. "It's supposed to be impossible to get rid of the trace on your wand."

"That's true." Tonks nodded. "But that doesn't mean there's no way around the trace at all. It's not commonly known but an authority figure may give you permission to perform magic for a certain moment of time. Your aunt, for example, may very well have given you permission to use magic in case of the attack on your home." Tonks explained to Susan.

"An authority figure?" Hermione said connecting the dots. "Like, for instance, a certified Auror like yourself?"

"Told you she would catch on fast." Harry said smiling to Tonks.

"Yeah, I know." Tonks nodded. "To answer your question Hermione, I Nymphadora Tonks, Junior Class Auror do hereby give Hermione Granger and Susan Bones, permission to use magic until I revoke that permission. So mote it be."

"That's it?" Susan said shocked. "All you have to do is get permission for one person and you can do magic out of school? That's pretty easy."

"It is but it's not widely known and usually very frowned upon." Tonks shrugged. "But who cares, right?"

"And how long have you known this Harry Potter?" Hermione glared at Harry.

"No need to get your panties in a twist Hermione." Harry said gulping a bit. "I've only been able to do magic for a few weeks now. We actually stumbled across that bit of information when looking through a book in the library. I'll show it to you later."

"Remember that she's banned from the library." Tonks quickly said.

"And remember that we doubled that punishment." Emma added much to Hermione's irritation. "Don't look at me like that, young lady. You might almost be an adult in the Wizarding World but don't think you're getting off that easily for lying to us all this time."

"Yes mum." Hermione said bowing her head in shame.

"Cheer up 'Mione, I'll get you a few books." Harry whispered to her. "They didn't say anything about not reading books from the library, did they?"

"Leave it to you to find a way to help her break our punishment." Dan laughed with Tonks' and Emma's glare aimed at Harry. "He's right; we didn't say anything about reading books from the library. We only said that she couldn't enter it for the duration of her punishment."

"I can see how the two of you got the break all those rules in Hogwarts." Susan said laughing as well. "Always looking for some loopholes huh?"

"Most our rule-breaking was done more out of necessity than anything else though." Harry said. "I mean, sure we did some stupid stuff but it was always to do something that the adults didn't do or didn't want to do in our place."

The rest of the day was pretty uneventful besides the kids showing Emma and Dan what they could do so far. The rest of the afternoon was then spent trying to learn silent casting and a few new spells. Later that night Harry and Tonks jumped up from the couch and excused themselves for a bit and went upstairs. They returned ten minutes later both disguised and dressed up. When Susan asked what was going on, Tonks quickly explained.

"Harry and I are going to go out and spy on some known lower level Death Eaters." Tonks said. "Nothing dangerous so don't worry. We're only going to the pub those guys frequent regularly. We've been going there for a while now."

"In fact that's how we learned of Voldemort's plan to attack your aunt." Harry added. "We'll be back pretty late so don't wait up."

"Hold on, you expect us to sit here and wait for you to come back?" Hermione said angrily.

"That's right." Tonks said forceful. "You're not ready to go out there. I know you fought Death Eaters only a few weeks ago but those were trying to catch you alive. There's a difference between them; these guys won't hesitate to rape, torture and kill you if they catch you."

"But what about your safety?" Emma said concerned. "Shouldn't you two have backup?"

"I'm the backup." Harry said. "I can't enter myself as I'm too well known even with my new look. My scar is still present and so I'm easily recognizable. However, thanks to my invisibility cloak I can safely guard Tonks from a distance without anyone noticing me. We've done it almost every night for the past few weeks so we know what we're doing."

"But..." Hermione protested.

"I promise everything will be fine." Tonks said to the girl. "Once you're trained and ready, you can join us but not before. It's too dangerous for you right now."

"Tonks is right." Dan said. "Soldiers need training first, and then they can join the battle. I know you want to help out but until they deem you ready, I will not let you go out there and get yourself killed because you weren't trained properly. It's bad enough that you need to fight in the first place."

Hermione sighed but surrendered knowing she had no chance of winning this argument. She watched as Dobby popped both Harry and Tonks to the outside world. She turned and raced to her room without looking back. Emma immediately followed telling Dan that this was a conversation between girls. Dan nodded and let his wife deal with their daughter. Emma knocked on Hermione's door and entered when she heard her cry.

"Oh 'Mione." She said when she saw the girl lying on her bed, crying her eyes out. She grabbed her daughter in a hug and let her cry. When Hermione finally stopped shaking Emma leaned back and grabbed a few tissues and handed them to Hermione. "Better?"

"Y-Yeah, thanks mum." Hermione said nodding.

"What brought this on?" Emma asked her. "Are you worried about them?"

"Of course I'm worried about them." Hermione said. "But that's not it. It's just that I feel so powerless right now. I wasn't there when Harry needed me the most. I know he had Tonks taking care of him but still, I should have been there. I thought that I could make it up to him by supporting him now but once more I can't do anything to help him. I feel so useless right now. I'm scared mum, I'm scared that one day Harry won't need me anymore; that he doesn't need my friendship any longer. If that happens I'll don't know what I'll do."

"Okay, listen to me." Emma said. "I can understand that you feel frustrated and angry at yourself but none of this is your fault. You weren't aware of what had happened to Harry in the first place. I'm

sure if he could have, he would have loved for you to be there with him. He doesn't blame you one bit because he knows that you would have helped in every way possible if you had been there. Secondly, Harry is never going to stop needing your friendship. He has considered you his best friend for years and even now with him and Tonks being together, he still looks at you for guidance and support. That'll never change, I'm sure of it."

"I'm being silly aren't I?" Hermione said wiping her tears.

"We're all allowed to act silly sometimes." Emma smiled hugging her daughter. "Now why don't you wash up a bit and come back up with us. We'll wait together until they're back okay?"

"Okay." Hermione nodded. "Thanks mum."

"Anytime baby girl." Emma said closing the door behind her. "Anytime."

## Chapter Ten: A new Minister

Harry and Tonks returned late that night, both tired and they looked to be death on their feet. When they entered the apartment however they noticed that everyone was still waiting for them. Though they had said not to wait up for them, they were secretly glad to see everyone. Hermione rushed forward and engulfed both Tonks and Harry in a tight hug, glad that they were back unharmed and safe. She led them to the couch and told them to sit down.

"Dobby is bringing Harry Potter sir and his Tonsil some refreshments." Dobby said popping out of nowhere with drinks for everyone.

"Thank you Dobby, that's very kind of you." Harry said taking the drink. "I suppose you all want to hear what happened now rather than tomorrow morning?"

"Yes." Hermione answered for everyone. "Now spill it."

"Well, it was pretty much a bust." Tonks admitted. "There wasn't a large crowd today so not much to discover. There were perhaps two or three suspected Death Eaters or followers present the entire time. I pretty much poured one Fire-Whiskey after another into them but in the end we didn't learn much."

"What we did learn is that Voldemort was pretty mad at not being able to kill you." Harry said to Amelia. "Apparently, he was going to do the deed personally."

"Am I supposed to feel honored." Amelia snorted.

"Guess not but that does tell us something about how much he considers you a threat to his plans." Tonks answered. "He wouldn't come out like that if he didn't consider it necessary. According to the guys in the pub, he was rightly pissed and even killed one of the Death Eaters that accompanied him for their failure."

"Good, the more he kills them, the less work we have." Amelia said with a grin.

"Other than that we didn't learn much." Harry sighed. "The ones we talked to today were pretty low on the food chain so they're mostly

unaware of anything major. They're mostly used to recruit or to cause panic during attacks. Still, it's good to know who's with Voldemort."

"I agree." Amelia said. "While I'm not sure I agree with how you do things, I believe gaining insight and intelligence is a vital point at this stage. However, I would prefer if you took a few extra backups with you."

"While extra backup would be great, it's not advisable for this kind of mission." Harry disagreed. "While some Death Eaters have shit for brains, pardon my French, most of them are quite adept at spotting an Auror, or recognize when they're being played. It's better to keep things as they are. Once we have enough information we can move on to capture and interrogation of Death Eaters."

"Very well, I don't like it but I see your point." Amelia admitted. "We cannot afford to make mistakes this time around. I informed Dumbledore that we would fight fire with fire. He didn't like but he conceded that it might be the only way to win this war."

"Bet he asked to know where we were." Tonks said knowingly.

"He did but I told him not to worry about that and that he should focus on fighting Voldemort." Amelia nodded. "I'm not sure I got through to him but at least I got him to support me in becoming the Minister of Magic. Also Minerva sends her regards to all of you and she's genuinely happy that you're okay. She didn't say it outright but I could tell she was worried about her favorite Gryffindors."

"On that note I think we should postpone the rest until tomorrow." Emma said pointing at a dozed off Harry on Tonks' shoulder.

Tonks chuckled and grabbed Harry and carried her upstairs after wishing everyone a good night. When she reached their room, she gently undressed Harry until she was in her panties and tucked her into bed. After getting rid of the tobacco smelling clothes she quickly joined her lover. She cuddled close to Harry and fell asleep in matter of minutes. Tomorrow would be a day filled with training and practice and their bodies needed the rest.

Several hours earlier, about the time Harry and Tonks had gone out to spy on Death Eaters; Albus Dumbledore had called a meeting at

the Headquarters of the Order of The Phoenix. After what he had learned from Amelia, he needed to inform everyone and make plans to support her. Once everyone had gathered, and Molly had chased the kids upstairs, the meeting started in earnest. He looked at the members and was glad to see so many familiar faces joining him.

"Welcome everyone and thank you for joining us tonight." Dumbledore started the meeting. "I have joyous news for everyone. Earlier today, I had a meeting with Amelia Bones and it seems she is indeed very serious about becoming Minister of Magic. This is good news for all of us as she has assured me that she will not allow Voldemort to take over the Wizarding World that easily. I talked with her about some of her ideas and, while a bit excessive in the use of force, I can safely say that Voldemort and his Death Eaters will not get off lightly this time."

"What do you mean?" Moody grunted.

"I mean that Amelia has decided that the Ministry will not sit by idle when innocent people are getting killed." Albus explained. "She intends to retaliate with deadly force in case of attacks and she's preparing to fight fire with fire."

"About time someone decided to do so." Moody approved. "Always knew the Bones lass wasn't one to mess with."

"While I do not entirely agree with Amelia on this point, I'm afraid we don't have much of a choice." Albus sighed. "His army is growing every day and we lost a lot of time because of Cornelius. I can only hope that we can reduce the number of deaths to a minimum."

"I agree with Amelia." Remus said speaking up. "We can't fight them with stunners and body bind curses, if we want to win this war. Some of them aren't worth giving another chance. People like Bellatrix Lestrange and Lucius Malfoy need to be stopped permanently before they can cause more deaths and mayhem." Several other members of the Order seemed to agree with him as well and Dumbledore thought it best to move on to the next point.

"Severus, what can you tell us?" Dumbledore said turning to the man in the corner.



"The Dark Lord's powers are growing at a steady rate." The potion master said. "He's recovered from the damage Potter did to him when he tried to possess him. It seems he has regained full power again and he's obviously very happy about it, though he's very angry about not being able to kill the Bones woman. He fears that she'll become a major problem to his plans."

"And quite right, I suspect." Dumbledore smiled. "What about his forces?"

"He ordered several Death Eaters to recruit new members and, not surprisingly, many take him up on the offer." Severus scowled. "He has sent envoys to the Giants, as you know, but also to the Vampires and other Dark Creatures, such as the Werewolf clans." Here he looked at Remus with hatred in his eyes. "I'm not sure what their answer will be but if they agree to join him, we'll be in trouble. So far only a few minor groups have agreed to join them."

"I'm sure he forgot to mention that he'll stab them in the back once everything is over." One of the order members remarked.

"The Dark Lord has always had a way to convince people to join him." Severus said. "The man has a way to ensnare you and make you sell your own mother if he asked it of you. Many don't even consider that they're nothing more than pawns. The promise of riches, women and pleasure is all they think about."

"Very well, thank you Severus." Dumbledore said to his friend.

"Excuse me Albus but did you hear anything about Harry and Hermione?" Molly said suddenly.

"As a matter of fact I did ask Amelia about them." Albus nodded as he had expected that question from the beginning. "Unfortunately, Amelia wasn't very forthcoming with information. She did ensure me that they were safe and sound but that they would remain hidden for the time being. I tried to get more out of her but I could tell she wasn't going to share anything with me. I'm afraid that all we can do is wait until Hogwarts starts again to see them."

"What was he thinking running off like that?" Molly said a bit angry. "Surely he's much safer here with us?"

"Now Molly, I'm sure that Harry's safe wherever he is." Arthur tried to calm down his wife before she starting raving again. "Don't forget that Tonks is with him and she's an Auror."

"That's what concerns me the most." Molly shouted. "There's no telling what she might do to poor Harry. What if she takes advantage of him? Harry's too fragile and young to be alone with an adult woman like Tonks."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kingsley Shacklebolt said angry. "I'll remind you Molly, that Tonks was my partner while we worked together as Aurors and that she's one of the finest people I know. I won't allow you to insult or badmouth her in any way."

"Oh please, don't think I didn't see how she looked at him when they were both here for Christmas." Molly argued. "You lot may not have seen it but I did. She was constantly flirting with him whenever they were together. That woman is up to no good I tell you."

"How dare you." Kingsley growled.

"Enough!" Dumbledore said. "Molly please refrain from insulting people and making wild accusations. Wherever he is, Harry is fine and I'm sure we'll see him again soon enough. There's only about two weeks left until school starts so I propose we take that time to prepare ourselves. Times are changing and we need to adapt to it. I want you all to keep your eyes and ears open to any information that might help the war effort. Thank you all for coming and I wish you all a good night."

Cornelius Fudge was not having a good summer. Of course the trouble he was in was of his own fault but why blame yourself if you can blame others? No, summer had been anything but enjoyable and the future looked even worse. Honestly, he was surprised he still was Minister of Magic at this point.

He had lost almost all of his support amongst the people and a few days ago when he had been to Diagon Alley had proved just that. Once he was spotted, people started yelling out profanities and throwing things at him. The name calling, however unpleasant, he could deal with but being bombarded with rotten fruit and vegetables was too much in his opinion. He still hadn't managed to get rid of the stink those rotten eggs had left on his cloak.

It was all Dumbledore's and that blasted Potter boy's fault that he was in this position right now. Why did they have to be right about everything? Okay, so he had been wrong not to believe them about the return of You-Know-Who. But who could blame him for that? The man had been defeated years ago by Potter so there's no way he could be back. For a whole year he had harassed Dumbledore and Potter, trying to make them admit that everything was okay but they just wouldn't budge.

Fudge sighed deeply. Well, the Kneazle was out of the Wizard hat now. Seeing You-Know-Who in person at the Ministry of Magic several weeks ago, make him rethink on his beliefs. He realized how much more dangerous his job had become but he wasn't about to give up on being Minister. For that, he liked the advantages too much. His musings about how to deal with the current situation when the doors of his office slammed open.

"Weatherby, what is the meaning of this?" Fudge roared. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Please forgive me Minister but you are needed." Percy said, having long given up on correcting his name to the man.

"Needed? Where?" Fudge asked not understanding.

"You are required at Courtroom Ten, sir." Percy said hastily. "The entire Wizengamot is waiting for you, sir."

"The Wizengamot? I wasn't aware there was a meeting scheduled for today." Fudge said grabbing his cloak and headed out the door. "Why wasn't I informed of this?"

"I'm sorry sir, but the meeting was unscheduled and was called together at the last minute by Dumbledore." Percy said trying to save his job.

Fudge didn't like the sound of that. Something fishy was going on here and he had a feeling he wasn't going to like the outcome of this meeting. Still, he hurried over to the Courtroom and barged right in. Once inside he could see that every Wizengamot member was present and accounted for.

"What is the meaning of this?" Fudge roared angry. "Why wasn't I informed of this meeting?"

"Ah welcome Cornelius." Dumbledore said smiling. "If you would please take a seat? This won't take but a moment." Dumbledore pointed to the seat in the middle of the room. Fudge looked on in horror at the chair but felt compelled to obey the order.

"What's going here?" He asked confused.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have called you all here to decide the future of our world." Dumbledore started. "As you all know, Voldemort has returned and he's gathering his army as we speak. If we want to survive this new war, we'll need a leader that will not shy away from doing what is right, instead of what is easy."

"Hold on one minute here, I'm Minister of Magic." Fudge said standing up.

"You are correct Cornelius." Dumbledore said. "But seeing how you've led us over the past year, some of us have begun to doubt your capabilities as our leader. You refused to listen to Mr. Potter and myself when we warned you about Voldemort's return and instead you waged a personal vendetta against us. You buried your head in the sand and have cost us greatly;"

"But..." Cornelius stammered.

"No Cornelius, you cannot put the blame on anyone but yourself." Dumbledore sighed. "If you had acted when we told you to, you could have been recognized as the bravest Minister ever. Instead you'll be remembered as the Minister who may have cost us the war against evil. I call for a vote of no confidence."

"Seconded." Amelia Bones said quickly.

"Amelia, you're alive?" Fudge said surprised. He hadn't paid any attention to most of the other members except Dumbledore.

"Yes thanks to a very brave young man and woman." Amelia said. "They warned me minutes before the attack, giving me and my niece just enough time to escape. If it hadn't been for them, I would

have been killed. Explanations can wait though; right now it's your position as Minister that needs to be dealt with."

"Surely Amelia, you wouldn't....?" Fudge begged the woman.

"You damn right I would." Amelia snapped. "Because of you we have lost a lot of time to prepare against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. You cost us more than you'll ever know because of your idiocy. I can only hope that we can undo the damage you have done to our world."

"I did what I thought was right." Fudge said hotly. "Who would believe a fourteen year old boy making such wild claims?"

"Then you should have investigated those claims." Another woman with a Vulture on her hat yelled. "Five kids risked their lives to expose You-Know-Who. If they could manage that, what does that make you? My own grandson was there, fighting alongside Harry Potter, trying to defeat some of the worst criminals in our world. Where were we?" she asked everyone in the room. "I, for one am ashamed that a sixteen year old boy needed to risk his life and that of his friends to reveal the truth."

Fudge wasn't the only one who looked down in shame at Augusta Longbottom's words. Almost three quarters of the people there hung their heads. All of them had refused to believe two of the greatest heroes in the Wizarding World, just because they were too scared to acknowledge the truth.

"Seeing that Cornelius isn't the right person to lead us through this war, I suggest we choose ourselves a new leader." Dumbledore said. "All in favor say Aye."

"Aye." Three quarters of the hands went up showing that most agreed with the Headmaster. Amelia Bones took special note of those who didn't raise their hand as she was sure those had something to hide. She would ask Harry if she could use his Pensieve later that night to review the memory. "Motion accepted. Sorry, Cornelius but it is done."

"No, you can't do this to me." Cornelius cried. "I'm the Minister of Magic."

"Not anymore you're not." Amelia said glad that this part was over. She turned to Dumbledore who nodded.

"I propose that we chose a new Minister of Magic straight away." Dumbledore proposed. "We have lost enough time already. We cannot afford to wait."

"But who could lead us through these troubled times?" One Witch in the back shouted.

"I have just the person for the job." Dumbledore said. "We need a Minister that will lead us through these trouble times, someone who will stand tall against the Darkness that threatens our world."

"Why don't you become Minister then?" A man shouted interrupting the Headmaster.

"Thank you for your confidence but I must decline." Albus silenced the cheering crowd. "I have no interest in becoming Minister as I prefer to watch over our children and their future. No, there is someone here that will do an excellent job and comes highly recommended."

"Who?" Lady Longbottom asked curious.

"I nominate Amelia Bones." Dumbledore smiled and Amelia slightly nodded back. "Amelia has been Director of Magical Law Enforcement for many years and she has leaded the Auror force wisely and with care. She knows what this world needs in order to survive the next few years. I'm sure she'll do an excellent job as the new Minister of Magic."

"Hold on, you said she came highly recommended?" Lady Longbottom asked. "Please don't misunderstand, I fully support Amelia as the next Minister of Magic but I would like to know more."

"Let me handle this Albus." Amelia said standing up. "My Lords and Ladies, if someone had told me that I would be running for office, I would have laughed in their face and told them to shove it. However, over the past few days I have had an epiphany. Only a few days ago I was attacked in my home by none other than Voldemort himself." She grumbled at how the men and women reacted to the name but continued. "It was only thanks to two people that I survived. I was

also these two people who convinced me to step up and run for Minister."

"Who were those people?" One shouted loudly.

"Harry Potter and Nymphadora Tonks." Amelia said. Immediately people started whispering and talking amongst themselves. "Mr. Potter and I have talked a lot over the past few days and we both believe that it's high time someone who is not afraid to dirty their hands is in charge."

"And you're that person?" Another Witch shouted. Amelia narrowed her eyes at the witch as she knew she was a supporter of Voldemort's cause even if she wasn't a Death Eater.

"I am that person." Amelia said calmly but everyone could see the strength of her words in her eyes. They were unwavering and looked everyone in that room in the eyes. "I will not let the likes of Voldemort and his cronies run around free while they kill and torture innocent men, women and children. We will fight back and we'll fight hard. If Voldemort wants this country then he will have to pry it from our cold, death hands."

Most of the Wizengamot cheered at her words and it didn't take much longer for the voting to start. A majority voted in her favor and an hour later she took the vows as Minister of Magic. Seeing that she had a lot of work to do, she ended the meeting there and told everyone that they would reconvene later that week to discuss the actions that needed to be taken. She told Percy to clean up his office as she would re-evaluate his performance under Fudge and decide later if she wanted him to be her assistant.

Two hours later Amelia was busy in her new office. She had to admit that it was a big step up from her former office but it mattered little to her. She asked Percy to let in Fudge for a private meeting with the former Minister of Magic. The man slumped into the office and sighed at seeing someone else sitting in his favorite chair.

"Sit down Cornelius." Amelia said. "This won't take long, I assure you."

"What do you want Amelia?" Fudge said angry. "Haven't you taken enough from me already?"

"What happened here today is nobody's fault but your own." Amelia all but shouted. "But I'm not going to lecture you about that, you made mistakes and now you have to face the consequences."

"What do you want then?" Fudge said.

"I'm giving you a warning." Amelia explained. "I could have you arrested and questioned for information about corruption and who bribed who in this ministry but I won't. Consider yourself lucky that neither Mr. Potter nor Dumbledore pressed charges against you for what you did last year. I had half a mind to arrest you anyway but I have enough on my plate as it is."

"......" Fudge just sat there looking shocked unable to say anything.

"If I were you Cornelius, I would leave the country." Amelia said. "You know too much about too many people and I'm sure some of them would prefer if you were permanently shut up. We all know how Malfoy seemed to own you through his gold so I'm pretty sure he won't like it if you babble about his affairs."

"No, I guess he wouldn't." Fudge said not even bothering to deny the charges.

"I don't like you Cornelius." Amelia sighed. "You were a lousy Minister and a corrupt one at that but I do not want you to die. Take this chance and leave with your family. Take them to safety. Once this war is over, then maybe you could come back but I'm telling you now, you will never be Minister of Magic again."

"Thank you, Amelia." Fudge said gratefully. "I believe I will take you up on your offer and leave Britain for the time being."

Amelia nodded and let Fudge leave. As he was about to exit she said one final thing. "Cornelius, one last word of caution, if I find that you were involved with Voldemort or his Death Eater, beyond taking money from Malfoy, then nowhere will be safe for you. I will hunt you down, arrest you and you will spend the rest of your life in Azkaban. Do I make myself clear?"



Cornelius gulped loudly but nodded before hurrying out of his former office as fast as he could. He didn't want to stay long enough for Amelia changing her mind. Hours later Cornelius and his family had left Britain for good, never to return.

When Fudge had gone from her office Amelia motioned to Percy to come inside. "Weasley, get in here." She called out. Strangely enough the boy didn't move and just kept up with his work. "Weasley!" She shouted again startling him causing him to almost fall out of his chair.

"Did you call for me, Madam Bones?" Percy asked coldly.

"Your name is Weasley isn't it?" Amelia shot back. "Or do you prefer 'Weatherby'?"

"No, Ma'am." Percy quickly shook his head.

"Good then get your ass in gear before I decide to kick start your engine." Amelia shouted. "I want to see every file you have on what Fudge has been doing over the past year. Don't leave anything out."

"That's a lot of files and I need to get them from archives." Percy frowned.

"Then you had better get started." Amelia told him shoving him out of her office. "And get me Kingsley Shacklebolt."

Percy ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the archives to get the files his new boss had asked him. On the way, he encountered a few Aurors and asked that they send Kingsley to see the Minister. The Aurors passed the message and Kingsley was soon on his way.

'Wonder what the douche bag wants now.' Kingsley muttered silently when he knocked the door. To his surprise a familiar voice told him to get in. When he opened the door he saw his former boss sitting where Fudge used to sit. "Boss?"

"Sit down, Kingsley." Amelia said with a slight smile. She liked the man as he was good at what he did. He was hardworking, honest, and bright and she figured he would make an excellent replacement for her. "As you have surely concluded by now, I'm the new Minister of Magic as of a few hours ago."

"I heard the rumors but I never figured you would actually agree to become Minister." Kingsley nodded. Though he had heard it during the meeting of the Order of the Phoenix, he still was genuinely surprised. "You always said that you were happy as Director."

"And you were right until a few days ago but I'm sure you're already aware of that." Amelia glared slightly to the man in front of her. "I'm well aware of how you and Auror Tonks are part of Dumbledore's little group."

"Ma'am, I assure you...." Kingsley started but halted when he saw Amelia hold up her hand.

"I understand your reasoning's, Kingsley." Amelia said. "I might not like it but I understand it. I didn't call you here to talk to you about Dumbledore and his vigilantes; as a matter of fact I believe that we need every bit of help we can get."

"Then why did you call me?" Kingsley said relieved. For a minute he feared for his job but it seemed that everything was fine for now.

"I called you because I need your help." Amelia told him. "I want you to take the position as Head of the Department of Law Enforcement. Can I count on you?"

"Y-You want me for that position?" Kingsley asked surprised.

"Yes, I need someone I can trust." Amelia nodded. "Your record speaks for itself; you're dedicated to the Light, loyal and willing to do what is necessary to get the job done. Besides you came highly recommended by Tonks and Harry Potter."

"Harry did that?" Kingsley wondered. "I'm honored Ma'am but are you sure you want me? I mean, they are others equally capable of handling that position."

"Yes there are others that might do a good job but unfortunately I can't be sure of their loyalties." Amelia admitted. "Also, not all of them have the backbone to fight against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. You on the other hand, have seen war before and just a few weeks ago you were there at the Department of Mysteries. That

alone tells me that you are willing to do whatever it takes to defend our world against the evil amongst our midst."

"Who will I report to?" Kingsley asked.

"You will report directly to me." Amelia answered. "I already decided I will take an active part in running this ministry and for that I need to be aware of what is happening inside this building. The other Head's of Departments will receive notice tomorrow. I'm planning on weeding out the bad influences as soon as possible."

"If you think that I'm suited for the job, then I'm your man." Kingsley decided.

"Good, I knew I could count on you." Amelia said happy. "One more thing, while I don't necessarily disagree with Dumbledore, I will expect you to take this seriously. No holding back when it comes to fighting Death Eaters. I believe it's time we fight fire with fire."

"Yes Ma'am." Kingsley said. "However, we're not equipped for that. Our Aurors are not trained to fight with deathly force and most of them haven't seen more actions than catching thugs or the occasional Dark Wizard. None of them have faced enemies like Voldemort and his Death Eaters."

"That's why I will reinstate Head-Auror Moody." Amelia agreed with Kingsley's assessment. "All Aurors will receive a crash course in fighting Dark Wizards and will be expected to know not only to defend against them but also defeat them. I realize that this will take time and a lot of effort but that's the best we can do for now. Also, we will be recruiting new forces by lowering some of the requirements to become an Auror."

"Let's hope we get the time to train them." Kingsley nodded in understanding. "If that is all Ma'am?"

"One last thing and this is a personal favor." Amelia asked. "I received some information about Dolores Umbridge using a blood quill on students during her time at Hogwarts. I want that women out of here but we lack proof at the moment. I would like for you to investigate her career here at the Ministry and report any and all misconduct. If we can get her arrested and questioned under Veritaserum, we can get her shipped to Azkaban."

"I'll get it done." Kingsley said. "I always disliked that woman. She's very unpleasant to have around. I'll let you know as soon as I found something."

When Amelia got home later that night she was utterly exhausted. The rest of the day had been spent by going over the files that Weasley had brought her and already she had half a mind to hunt down Fudge and throw his sorry ass in Azkaban. From what she had learned, he had been receiving bribes from Malfoy, Nott, Greengrass and Parkinson in order to allow a few minor laws in their favor. This was only the beginning and she wondered what else the man had done in order to enrich himself. It would take a lot of time and effort to restore the Wizarding World.

## Chapter Eleven: Baby steps

Voldemort was one unhappy Dark Lord. It seemed to him like he was doomed to fail in everything he had planned ever since his rebirth last summer. Sure some things had gone smoothly; like how the Ministry of Magic and thus the rest of their world refused to believe in his return. That at least had given him the time to gather his men and start on planning to rebuild his army. But even that was overshadowed by the fact that the Potter boy had managed to get away that night.

He still didn't understand how a fourteen year old boy with nothing more than a Hogwarts education had managed to get away from him. The event of their wands locking together and preventing him from killing the boy baffled him even to this day and while he was very curious about what had happened he was also sure that it would be an isolated event. The next time he saw the Potter boy he would die, he would make sure of that. If only that were true he thought.

Over the past year he had managed to free his most loyal servants from Azkaban and had started on gathering his army again. It wasn't all that hard to convince some of the Giants tribes and Werewolf tribes to fight alongside with him. While he was disgusted by their presence, they made good soldiers. Giants were not easy to deal with as they had little or no intelligence but once convinced they could be a major force in his army. Of course, Dumbledore had send an envoy to the Giants as well but without success. Dumbledore failed to understand that the true nature of the Giants was not peace but battle. Giants fought all the time. They fought their own clan-members for food, women and power. Once you understood that, it was pretty easy to get them on your side.

The Werewolf tribes were easier to deal with. They had been suppressed and hated by the Ministry of Magic for decades. The laws that had passed against Werewolves ensured that no one inflicted with the disease would be able to work or live in the Wizarding World of today. The discrimination against them was blatant and many harbored ill feelings and hate for the Wizarding World. All he had to do was promised them revenge against those who made their life miserable and better rights when he was in charge.

He wasn't about to reveal that he thought of Giants and Werewolves as beasts and cannon fodder that could be used to bolster his army. Why send Pureblood Witches and Wizards when you could send beasts instead? That many would die didn't matter to him; all that mattered was that he gained control of the Wizarding World.

With his army was steadily growing he delegated the task of recruitment to Bellatrix Lestrange while he focused on more important things. Such as sending those visions to Harry Potter. It took a lot of strength and power to feed these images to the boy but he felt that in the end it would pay off. And it would have, if it wasn't for the defeat he suffered that night in the Department of Mysteries. First the best Death Eaters he had were getting pushed around by students no older than fifteen. Sure, he had forbidden them from killing them until they got the Prophecy but they should have easily secured it from a few kids. Not only that but they had gotten themselves arrested as well. He had freed them of course but the punishment they received for failing him was far worse than a short stay in Azkaban.

That wasn't what bothered him the most though. No, what bothered him was that once more he had failed to kill Dumbledore and that Potter boy. Dueling Dumbledore was fun but not something he wanted to do a lot. Even now, with Dumbledore being almost 120 years of age, he still couldn't defeat him in battle. It was infuriating to see how that man managed to defeat him time and time again. Not that it mattered as Dumbledore wouldn't be around much longer as 120 years old was just about the oldest Witches and Wizards became. Even if he lived longer, his body wouldn't be able to take the strain of battle for much longer.

When he had tried to possess the Potter boy however, he had been truly hurt. The only other time that he had felt such pain was that Halloween night in '81. Not that he would ever admit that of course. It had taken him weeks to recover from that experience and he still felt the phantom pains of the moment the Potter boy pushed him out and ended the possession. At that precise moment he had felt the power of Harry Potter and if he had been any lesser man, he would have feared that power. It wasn't that Potter was stronger than him but rather the sheer potential the boy had. Truly, Potter would be a force to be reckoned with if he was allowed to grow up. That was something that would have to be remedied.

"Wormtail, get your useless behind over here." Voldemort yelled.

"Y-You called M-My Lord?" Peter Pettigrew aka 'Wormtail' groveled before his master.

"Wormtail, where are we on the preparations of my army?" Voldemort demanded.

"M-My Lord, p-preparations are right on schedule." Wormtail said. "The Giants are being escorted from Europe to Britain and should arrive in the next few weeks. The Werewolf tribes are being taken care of as many of them are sick or weak in health. S-Severus is brewing some potions to ensure that they are in fighting condition as soon as possible."

"What about the Dementors?" Voldemort nodded.

"M-My Lord, they have agreed to leave Azkaban and are awaiting your orders." Peter quickly said.

"Excellent Wormtail, you've done well." Voldemort said standing up. "How are Lucius and the rest?"

"They are recovering nicely My Lord." Wormtail said getting some confidence. "Their few weeks stay in Azkaban has weakened them but they should be fine in a few days."

"Make sure they do Wormtail." Voldemort threatened. "Do not fail me or else."

"Y-Yes My L-Lord." Pettigrew said kissing the hems of his master's robes. "It shall be done."

"Good now leave me." Voldemort ordered.

Pettigrew got up as fast as he could and practically ran out of the room. He was lucky today as he hadn't been cursed by his master. Usually, being summoned meant that you did something to displease the master and that went hand in hand with being put under the Cruciatus Curse. It seemed his master was in a good mood, which didn't happen much.

When Wormtail had left, Voldemort returned to his pondering. Being forced to flee when half of the ministry was present wasn't something that he liked. It wasn't good for his reputation as the most feared Dark Lord in recent history. Still, at the time it couldn't be helped. The possession of Potter had taken all his strength and getting expelled from the boy had seriously hurt him. His Death Eaters didn't know this of course but then again most of them were idiots to begin with.

If that had been the only defeat this year, well he could live with that. Unfortunately, he had another defeat only a week ago. His spies in the Ministry had hinted that Fudge was on his way out and that meant that a new Minister of Magic was to be selected. If he got one of his men to take that place, the takeover of the Ministry would be easy. Ideally, he would take that position himself but for now he was willing to put a puppet in place. His spies however alerted him that the prime candidate was none other than Amelia Bones and that was something that couldn't be allowed.

That woman was a Blood-Traitor and squarely on the side of Light. She was a proactive woman that wouldn't take no for an answer and if she was to get in power, it would spell trouble for him. Not that she was a threat to him personally but rather she would fight him every step of the way. Thanks to Fudge, she had little or nothing to work with but no need to take chances. So he had wanted her dead and was even going to do the deed himself. When they arrived at her home, they found it empty, stripped naked of everything of value. All that remained was empty manor. How she knew he was coming for her, he didn't know but he didn't like it. Perhaps she had come to the conclusion herself but he felt that she was warned somehow. His anger at being ridiculed had cost him one of his men. The poor sod had the nerve to tell him the obvious and had paid the ultimate price.

The fact that she managed to get away bothered him. He was pretty sure he acted fast enough once the rumors were confirmed so either she had anticipated his move or she had been warned. The first was plausible but unlikely. Amelia Bones was considered a smart woman but even she wouldn't think that he would come after her so soon. The only logical conclusion was that she had been warned about the attack and that could only mean two things. Either there was a traitor in his ranks or someone had blabbed. Either way, someone was going to pay for this humiliation and failure.



The next morning at breakfast Harry sat down only to find a copy of the 'Daily Prophet' lying there. How it got there, she didn't know as she had stopped reading that excuse for a newspaper a long time ago. She figured it was either Hermione's, as she argued that it was good to know what was happening in the world, or Amelia's copy. She was about to ignore it altogether when the headline on the first page caught her eye. Grabbing the paper she started reading.

When Tonks came down she stared at Harry when she saw her reading the paper. She knew all too well how much Harry disliked that paper, so seeing her reading it surprised her. She was about to comment on it when the rest of the crew arrived as well. Only Hermione knew Harry's feelings on the 'Daily Prophet' so she immediately called her up about it.

"Harry, I thought you hated the 'Daily Prophet'?" She asked curiously.

"I do but take a look at this." Harry said showing them the article she had been reading.

'Fudge out, Bones in'

In a surprising move by the Wizengamot, Cornelius Fudge was relieved of his position as Minister of Magic, yesterday afternoon. Cornelius Fudge has had an impressive career at the Minister of Magic, starting out as a lower level employee before managing to work his way up to the post of Minister of Magic following the retirement of former Minister of Magic, Millicent Bagnold.

Now however it seems that Cornelius Fudge had more than one skeleton hiding in his closet. For you, readers of the Daily Prophet, I did a serious investigation into the man that is Cornelius Fudge. It seemed our esteemed former leader has been telling us lies all along. What is mentioned here today is only the beginning but it is enough to make even this reporter speechless.

While he gave the people of the Wizarding World the idea that he was an independent leader, truth is that he regularly sought help with Albus Dumbledore and Lucius Malfoy. This is surprising as we discovered that Fudge greatly feared that Dumbledore was trying to become Minister of Magic, even when the man refused the position

numerous times before. What's even more shocking is that he counted Lucius Malfoy as one of his most trusted advisors.

It is only a few weeks ago that this trusted advisor was unmasked to be one of You-Know-Who's followers, something the man has always denied since the last war. This reporter questions what kind of advice a known Death Eater may have given Fudge over the years. How much damage has Cornelius Fudge brought upon the Wizarding World by taking advice from one of You-Know-Who's most faithful servants.(For more on Lucius Malfoy see page 6)

That Cornelius Fudge caused irrevocable damages becomes clear when this reporter uncovered what might have been the greatest cover-up in the history. For a whole year the Ministry of Magic denied that You-Know-Who had returned, only to admit several weeks ago that the strongest Dark Wizard in recent time has indeed returned. For an entire year, Fudge and the Ministry of Magic slandered Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter when in fact they have been telling the truth all along.

We can only guess why Fudge kept this hidden from the Wizarding World. Was it because he was bribed into silence? Or perhaps he was too afraid to admit the truth? Maybe he's a follower of You-Know-Who as well and protected his master's return? We may never know as Cornelius Fudge was unreachable for an interview for the foreseeable future. Rumors have it that Fudge and his family has left the country in fear of repercussions and attacks. Others say that he's rejoined his master at his side as one of his most trusted servants.

Now that You-Know-Who's return has been proved, the Wizarding World has once again entered dark times. People are too scared to come out and already some prominent families have fled the country. More are surely to follow in their footsteps once You-Know-Who starts his war once more. In these dark times, the Wizarding World looks at its heroes to protect them. But will these heroes be willing to fight after being slandered for so long.

Under Fudge's orders Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore have been portrayed as an attention seeking brat and a senile old man past his prime. We, as a people, have wronged our heroes and as a people we implore them not to abandon us. Harry Potter, the famous Boy-Who-Lived, hasn't been seen since the end of the Hogwarts

school year. This reporter can only hope that our young hero hasn't left us to face these dark times alone.

Still, not all is lost as it seems that the Ministry of Magic is taking control of the situation. With the sacking of Fudge as Minister of Magic, a new figure has emerged as our leader. This leader is none other than Amelia Bones, former Head of the Department of Law Enforcement, has taken over as Minister of Magic. Amelia Bones has had a distinguished career over the time. She first started out as Junior Auror during the early sixties, quickly moving up until she became Head of the Department of Law Enforcement in the late eighties. She has fought during the first war with You-Know-Who and is known for being incorruptible.(More on Amelia Bones on page 3)

This reporter can only pray that Amelia Bones will guide us through these hard and dark times. With You-Know-Who's return the Wizarding World will need a leader capable of withstanding the most grievous of situations.

Written by Rita Skeeter

Head reporter of the Daily Prophet.

When Harry finished reading everyone was silent and staring at the paper. While none of it had been really new to them, it was remarkable how fast the Daily Prophet had picked up on Fudge being fired as Minister of Magic. Amelia seemed furious though.

"By Merlin's hairy balls." She cursed. "How did she find out about all of that? That Wizengamot session was supposed to be secret until later today. There's no way she should have known about it as we made sure that everyone present know to keep their mouth shut."

"Amelia please, there's no reason to use foul language." Andromeda chided the woman.

"I'm sorry Andy but this is serious." Amelia sighed. "If a reporter can find out secret Wizengamot meetings, who knows what else she might uncover? We can't afford this right now; the Ministry's position is weak enough as it is. How the hell did she get that information is what I'd like to know?"

"I believe we can answer that." Harry said.

"You can? How?" Amelia said skeptical.

"Sure, she's an illegal Animagus." Harry explained. "Hermione and I found out at the end of our fourth year. She's a beetle; so small enough to pass unnoticed if nobody is looking."

"A beetle Animagus?" Amelia said shocked. "And you're sure about this?"

"Positively." Hermione nodded. "We blackmailed her into telling the truth last year. We can of threatened her to reveal her if she kept writing those lies about Harry. Unfortunately, the deal lasted only for one year so now she back at writing whatever she wants."

"Hermione Jane Granger, you blackmailed a reporter?" Dan said shocked.

"W-well, it was the only thing we could think of at the time." Hermione said hoping she wouldn't receive more punishment. "She kept telling these lies all through fourth year so we decided to do something about it."

"I'm so proud of you." Dan grinned.

"Huh?" Hermione blinked in surprise. "You're not mad?"

"Of course not." Her father said. "For years your mother and I have been trying to get you to question the things you read. You've always been too accepting of things that are written down, be it in books or papers. Also, you had this crazy tendency to blindly follow authoritative figures, which is good at times but we wanted you to learn how to make your own judgment."

"So hearing how you blackmailed a reporter is somewhat impressive." Emma nodded. "Just don't do it again."

"Yes mom." Hermione smiled.

"While that is all good and well, I'm still shocked that we have such a security leak in the Ministry." Amelia sighed. "I realize that you can't keep everything a secret but some things aren't fit to be released to

the people. I agree that V-Voldemort's return should have been better prepared but I agree with Fudge on keeping it hidden as long as possible. No reason to send the crowd into a panic."

"So you would have done the same?" Harry asked narrowing his eyes. "Just let everyone in the dark about everything?"

"No Harry, I would have prepared our Aurors for war." Amelia quickly corrected herself. "What Fudge did was stupid and downright irresponsible. He should have taken your warning seriously and prepared the Ministry for what is to come. I don't intend to make the same mistake. When I said that I would keep Voldemort's return a secret it would be because I wouldn't want the people in the street to panic. Have you been to Diagon Alley recently?"

"Can't say I have beyond our trips to the pub to find out information about Voldemort." Harry admitted.

"It's deserted Harry." Susan said. "I went just a few days before we arrived here. When I arrived it was about noon and normally it's crowded and busy but now, there's virtually nobody. Several shops are closed already and more of them close every day. It's like the Wizarding World is devoid of citizens. It's really creepy."

"Only the most foolish or bravest, depending how you look at it, come out at night." Amelia added. "Most of them do their shopping in the morning, and even then it's a quick stop at the store before heading back home. It's killing our economy and that's just the beginning. When Voldemort begins his attacks again, things will only get worse."

"I'm sorry; I didn't mean to accuse you of anything." Harry apologized understanding what Amelia had meant to say. "It's just that I'm so frustrated with how things are going."

"Don't worry about it Harry." Amelia smiled. "And I completely understand your frustrations as I have my fair share of those as well. Just remember that we need to take it one step at a time. We need to proceed carefully and plan our moves just right. We can't afford to make mistakes this time."

"I know." Harry sighed. "I'll be in the training room if anyone needs me."

Tonks excused herself and ran after Harry to make sure she was alright. Hermione was held back by her mother saying that she needed to finish breakfast first and that she should give the two of them a bit of time. Hermione didn't like it but she agreed with her mother on this one. Right now Tonks was the only one suited to calm Harry down.

When Tonks entered the training room Harry was already punching away at the sandbag. She didn't try to stop her knowing that she would do so when her frustrations had lessened a bit. She watched as she kept punching until her knuckles were bleeding from hitting the raw material of the sandbag. When she had finally run out of juice Harry stopped punching.

"Feel better?" Tonks asked when she grabbed her hands and quickly healed the wounds.

"A bit." Harry admitted.

"Good, then kiss me." Tonks said demanding a kiss.

Harry smiled and grabbed Tonks in a loving embrace before kissing her. Tonks pulled her closer and they kissed until both of them had to catch their breath. They walked over to the meditation area where they sat down to talk. Tonks sat down and motioned Harry to lie down with her head in her lap, which she did. Tonks played with the long red hair, gently stroking and brushing it, knowing that Harry enjoyed the feeling.

"What's on your mind?" She asked Harry.

"Everything." Harry sighed. "S-Sirius' death, this transformation to this girl body, Voldemort building up his army, us being nowhere near ready to fight back."

"Harry, you need to slow down." Tonks said bowing down to kiss to her forehead. "I understand why you're frustrated but you can't expect to have everything under control in one fell swoop."

"I know but...." Harry sighed.

"No, we're doing everything we can so stop beating yourself up about it." Tonks said sternly. "Yes we still have a long way to go but every journey starts with the first steps. That's what we're doing. Don't worry about things that you can't control, it will only make things worse. Focus on what you can do and things will seem much easier."

"I guess I'm being stupid." Harry admitted.

"No, never stupid." Tonks smiled. "Just trying to take on too much."

"Thanks Tonks, for everything." Harry said sitting up and hugging her.

"Any time, babe." Tonks said kissing her. "And just for the record, I thought we agreed that you would make an effort to accept what happened."

"I know and I'm really trying but sometimes it just hits me in the face." Harry admitted. "I really do try."

"That's all I ask." Tonks said. "Just so you know, I happen to like this beautiful body of yours. I love how soft your skin is and how those goosebumps appear when I touch you in certain places. I especially like how you feel against me when we shower or take a nap."

"I like that too." Harry said blushing. "Don't you ever wonder what I would have been like if I was still a guy?"

"Nope, because what we have now is everything I could ever dream of." Tonks said honestly. "When we make love, I don't think about any of that. I think about how wonderful and amazing you are, how you make my toes curl when you kiss me and how turned on I get when you stand before me naked. Not to mention what you do to me when you touch me. While I'm sure that you would have been wonderful lover as a guy, I know that you are amazing right now. There's nothing I would change about how things are between us."

"Really?" Harry asked her.

"It seems someone needs to be convinced?" Tonks grinned and she gently pulled Harry in her arms, Harry's back against her chest. Turning her head she kissed him slowly and one hand moved to

Harry's breasts, squeezing them gently before she pinched a nipple. Harry moaned in pleasure and Tonks smirked in the kiss. Her other hand moved to Harry's waist and in one short move, she slipped it inside Harry's panties. Harry gasped as Tonks started rubbing her most sensitive place with gentle caresses. Her own hand moved up to her unattended breast and nipple.

Tonks felt Harry's excitement as she traced a finger along Harry's entrance. The wet feeling told her that Harry was not only enjoying what she did but also that she wanted more. Well, she wasn't about to disappoint her lover in that way. Gently stroking the labia she enjoyed Harry's moaning and shaking for a bit longer before she entered her middle finger into the wet folds.

"Oh god Tonks, don't stop." Harry moaned breaking the kiss.

"I have no intention of stopping baby." Tonks smiled as she placed her lips on Harry's, kissing her gently while slowly moving her finger in and out. Soon Harry's hips started to move as well, and when she felt Harry's breathing pick up Tonks knew she was close. She sped up the movement of her finger wanting to give Harry the release she so badly needed. When Harry was about to scream out in pleasure she kissed her hard and held her as she rode out the pleasure of her orgasm. She waited until Harry stopped moving to remove her hand making Harry moan in displeasure. Harry watched in shock as Tonks licked her fingers clean.

"Hmm, yummy." Tonks smiled.

"That was so hot." Harry breathed slowly.

"What? Licking my fingers?" Tonks asked. "We tasted each other plenty of times. What's so different about it now?"

"I don't know but it is." Harry said laying down her head on Tonks' lap again. "Thank you for that. That was amazing."

"You're welcome and it was my pleasure." Tonks said. "Maybe you can return the favor tonight?"

"Consider it done." Harry smiled.



"Good, then let's take a shower and after that we go get Hermione and Susan and start our exercises." Tonks said pulling Harry up.

Harry groaned at having to get up but let her be pulled up. She joined Tonks in the shower and fifteen minutes later both Hermione and Susan had joined them in the training room. Hermione had been bursting to ask Harry how she felt but when she saw her, she knew Harry was okay. She didn't know how Tonks had managed to calm him down and something told her that she didn't want to know but she was grateful for it. Dealing with a frustrated Harry could be difficult to say the least.

Once they had done the usual exercises Tonks called Hermione and Susan to her while Harry moved to the middle of the room. Hermione watched as Tonks took out a large box filled with what seemed to be ordinary tennis balls. Before she could ask what the point was Tonks started explaining.

"Okay the next exercise is probably one of the most important ones." Tonks said. "These tennis balls are charmed to work as if they were the Bludgers in Quidditch. Meaning that they will try and hit you in the face. Now before I really explain the purpose of this, Harry will show what to do."

Harry nodded and Tonks grabbed several balls before throwing them in the air. Once they were airborne the balls hovered around a bit before they started flying in all directions. Harry stood there with her eyes closed for a few seconds and then suddenly opened her eyes when one of the balls almost hit her in the face. She leaned her head to the right, narrowly dodging the ball.

Now all the other balls started heading towards Harry as well and she was forced to dodge several of them at the same time. Hermione and Susan watched as Harry continued dodging the balls by jumping all over the place. Even though she jumped around, some of the movements were compact and precise. For several minutes, none of the balls had managed to hit her until after almost five minutes she got hit straight in the back. The girls saw her grimace in pain but Harry didn't stop moving. The other balls were still coming towards her. It seemed however that the hit had a bad influence on Harry as she seemed to have lost her concentration and kept being hit by the balls. Bruises started to appear on her body showing the spectators that the balls really hit quite hard. A

few more minutes later Tonks summoned the balls back to her and Harry slumped down on the floor breathing heavily.

"Not bad." Tonks said to her. "You improved your time with almost fifteen seconds. Nicely done, babe."

"Thanks." Harry managed to say. "I still keep losing my concentration once I'm hit. Once I lose it, it's really hard to regain control."

"Don't worry about it." Tonks said. "You're getting better at it so it won't be long before you manage to keep concentrated enough to keep dodging. In the end, it will come naturally and you won't have to focus that much."

"I know." Harry smiled. "Well, your turn." She said to Hermione and Suzan. "You need to dodge as many balls as you can, for as long as you can. This exercise will teach you how to dodge spells."

"Why dodge them? We can just as easily use a shield to block them." Suzan said not seeing the benefit of this training.

"Because our enemies will use magic that we're unfamiliar with." Tonks said. "How do you know what shield will stop the spell? What if it just breaks through it and hits you? No, the best defense against unknown magic is not being hit. There are shields that will stop most magic, that's true but those are very taxing and ineffective to use during a fight. Also, using shields costs a lot of magical power, something we need to attack our enemies with. So by dodging we save our strength instead of wasting it."

"However that's not the only thing this exercise does." Harry told them. "It's also a way to increase your reflexes and stamina. You saw how I moved all around the place, right?" When the girls nodded she continued. "Well, let me assure you that doing so takes a lot of energy. While we are doing other training as well, this exercise is great for stamina improvement."

"Of course, the goal is to waste as less energy as possible when dodging." Tonks quickly said. "Harry has been making a lot of improvement but she still wastes too much energy by jumping all around the place. She needs to be able to use small, compact movements and move just enough to be out of the ball's way."

"Which is easier said than done." Harry said rubbing some 'Bruise-Healing Paste' on her bruises. "Now you know why I'm constantly making this." She said to Hermione who gulped in fear.

"Of course, the two of you will start out with one ball." Tonks said calming them down. "Once you're proficient at dodging one ball, we'll slowly increase the number. Don't relax just yet because one ball is hard enough as it is."

"Looks like fun." Suzan said sarcastically.

"Thank you Suzan for volunteering to go first." Tonks grinned to Suzan's horror.

Glaring at Tonks Suzan stood in the middle of the room, dreading what was to come. While she had some confidence that she could dodge it, at least in the beginning, she worried when she saw Harry rub some more of the paste she made on her bruises. That didn't seem like any fun at all.

## Chapter Twelve: Expanding the club

After both Hermione and Susan had been pummeled by tennis balls for over half an hour, Tonks put an end to the exercise. Both girls were covered with painful bruises and they were very glad that Harry had made so much 'Bruise-Healing Paste'. Thanks to the paste the bruises would be gone by nightfall. It also reduced the pain and gave a soothing effect.

"Well, seeing that you two are pretty much exhausted, we'll focus on Occlumency for the rest of the morning." Tonks said. "This afternoon we'll try to get in some sparring but for now let's relax and catch our breath." Tonks too had been practicing with dodging though she had to dodge several more balls at the same time. Thankfully to her Auror training, she had plenty experience and thus lacked the numerous bruises the other girls had.

The foursome went to the garden and took a seat. Harry, who had been working on Occlumency for quite some time now had no trouble entering a meditative state, unlike Hermione and Susan. He focus on relaxing and soon he felt himself completely in trance, with the outside world vanishing from his mind. He had made it this far the previous times as well but never had he felt so at peace as he did now. He figured that it meant he was ready to start building his mental defenses.

In fact, there were several ways to protects one's mind. First, there was Snape's approach by completely emptying your mind. This was however a very difficult method as it was nigh on impossible to completely stop thinking. Emptying your mind took a lot of effort and while extremely effective when mastered it was a bitch to learn. Something Harry had learned over the last year at Hogwarts.

When a Leglimens entered your mind, he or she could catch glimpses of what you're thinking of at that precise time. They could use those glimpse to search memories and feelings. That was what Snape had done; he saw a glimpse of something and that honed in on that particular memory or thought. The Occlumens could hide those memories by directing the invader towards other, non-essential memories. That took a lot of experience though so Snape tried to teach her to simply empty her mind. Harry failed miserably.

The second method was more to her liking. This method used the concept of building a mindscape where memories and thoughts could be placed. The mindscape could be anything the user wanted it to be. This method took a lot more time to build as it had to be constructed out of nothing. So if you wanted a castle like Hogwarts to house your memories and thoughts, you would need to build it from the first brick up. It was also an indication to the invader that that person had something to hide and where it could be hidden.

Nonetheless, as she had failed at the first method Harry decided to try the second way. She thought about what kind of construction she could use to protect her mind. It would need to be capable to withstand attacks and make it difficult for the invader to find what he or she was looking for. Suddenly an idea came to mind. If she were to build a large building, not unlike the one she was living in right now, he could use the different floors to separate the more important things from the rest. Yes, that sounded exactly what she needed.

Starting out simply she envisioned the groundwork first. Her building would need to be big so it needed a strong foundation. As she conjured a large hole in the ground, her mindscape changed into what she saw in her mind eye. A large plain appeared with a deep hole in the middle of it. Satisfied, Harry nodded and imagined how several pillars of reinforced concrete would support the rest of the building. One by one the pillars appeared, each one strong enough to support at least a small house. In total over twenty pillars now stood erected in the hole.

Harry lined the walls of the hole with large slabs of stone, closing the foundation off with a roof that was also be the ground floor of the building. It was surprisingly easy to accomplish so much but the work was nowhere near completed. Now that she had a foundation to build upon, Harry started to think about how to proceed. After pondering about it she decided that she would build one floor at a time. The ground level would be the entrance, just like a real time apartment building. As she thought about it, a large turning door appeared, giving access to the foyer. The foyer was nothing more than an empty place but for now that would suffice.

Seeing that she needed to make a way to access to the higher levels, Harry thought about a stairway at the back of the foyer. She also created a space where later she could build an elevator. With access to the higher levels available Harry now focused on making

the ceiling. It appeared just as easily as all the rest had done. She was about to continue when she was violently thrown out of her mindscape.

When she opened her eyes, she noticed a worried looking Tonks staring up at her. Hermione and Susan standing behind her looking equally worried. She was about to ask what happened when she felt an incredible tiredness hit her. Her entire body ached like never before and her breathing was ragged. It seemed like she had run several marathons.

"W-what happened?" She asked Tonks.

"Thank Merlin; I thought we wouldn't get you to wake up." Tonks said hugging the lithe form of Harry closely. "We've been trying to make you open your eyes for over half an hour now."

"Half an hour?" Harry said surprised. "How long have I been meditating."

"Harry, it's been almost two and a half hours since we started." Hermione said to her.

"R-Really? That long?" Harry said shocked as to her it only felt like a few minutes.

"What were you doing?" Tonks questioned him.

Harry quickly told them everything. She told them how she had started building his mindscape and how easy it seemed to go. She gave them a small overview of what she had planned for her mindscape. The girls were impressed and admitted that what she had in mind was a good idea.

"So you'll use the layout of this building?" Tonks asked her.

"Yeah, I figured that I could use some floors to hide memories and thoughts; and others to make traps and hinder the invader." Harry smiled. "I'm sure I could come up with some nasty ideas."

"No doubt." Tonks grinned before she turned serious. "Just don't scare me like that again. I was close to dumping a bucket of ice cold water on you. We tried almost everything else."

"Sorry." Harry said hugging Tonks close. "I do wonder what I feel so tired. It's not like I used any actual physical force or anything."

"That's because your tiredness isn't psychical but rather magical." Hermione explained. "I read that building an actual mindscape takes up a lot of power and its really exhausting to build. That's why not many use that method."

"Ah, that explains it." Harry nodded in comprehension. "Well, I'll take things slowly then. No reason to tire myself out building that mindscape."

"Well, it's about time for lunch so we might as well take a break." Susan proposed.

"Excellent idea." Harry smiled and after helping Tonks stand up the four of them exited the training room and headed upstairs to get some much needed food.

Elsewhere, in the Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix to be exact things weren't going that smoothly. Ever since the news that Harry, Tonks and Hermione had disappeared several inhabitants of Grimmauld Place had been in a bad mood. Ron and Ginny were angry that they were stuck inside the old house while worrying what Harry and Hermione were doing. Added to that was that his mother was constantly on his case to help with chores and housework. Definitely not the way he wanted to end his summer.

"Bollocks, I hate this." Ron said angrily.

"Will you shut up!" Ginny yelled back. "I hate it just as much but there's nothing we can do about it. It's only a few more days until Hogwarts starts, we'll see Harry and Hermione then."

"I just don't like it that's all." Ron said defensive. "Harry and Hermione are somewhere alone doing who knows what and we're stuck here. I wished I was with them as well."

"Me too." Ginny agreed. "But we're safe and Hermione and her family weren't. That's why Harry took her with him."

"Took her where? She could have just as easily come here instead of with him." Ron argued.

"Honestly Ron, if you were giving the choice to go with Harry or come here, what would you have chosen." Ginny rolled her eyes at her brother. "It doesn't take a genius to know why she went with Harry. Hell, I would have gone with him as well."

"That's because you fancy Harry." Ron snorted but winced in pain when Ginny threw a chess piece at his head.

"Shut up you prat." Ginny said angry. "What I feel for Harry has nothing to do with this and let's not talk about your little obsession with Hermione."

"What? What are you on about?" Ron said trying to deny everything.

"Oh don't hide it from me." Ginny laughed in victory. "I've seen the way you look at her when you think nobody is watching. Don't think I'm the only who noticed either."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Ron continued to deny.

"Whatever you say, Ron. Whatever you say." Ginny said. "Just remember that Hermione isn't so oblivious as you think she is."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Ron asked.

"It means that Hermione is surely aware of your little crush on her." Ginny said smirking at the panic on her brother's face. "Oh, don't be such a crybaby; I'm sure she's not too bothered by it."

"Has she said something to you about me?" Ron wanted to know.

"No, she hasn't." Ginny said honestly.

"Do you think I've got a chance?" Ron pressed on.

"Can't say, I really don't know Hermione all that well." Ginny admitted. "Sure, we talked a few times but that was mostly about school and Harry."

"Why did you talk about Harry to her?" Ron said a bit angry.



"Not that it's any of your business but I wanted to know how to approach Harry." Ginny glared at Ron. "She said that Harry always needed more friends so I tried to become his friend."

"But nothing about me?" Ron asked again.

"Nope." Ginny answered. "Look Ron, if you like Hermione then maybe you should try to do something nice to her once in a while."

"Like what?" Ron asked interested.

"Oh, I don't know. How about making your own homework?" Ginny sighed. "Or listening when she talks about the things she likes instead of always calling her mental for reading ahead?"

"I can do that." Ron said confident.

"Good then maybe you'll get somewhere someday." Ginny said pleased.

"What about Harry?" Ron said.

"What about him?" Ginny retorted.

"You know, mum said that he and Tonks were always looking at each other. Like they were involved or something." Ron shrugged.

"Don't be ridiculous, Ron. She's like six or seven years older than him." Ginny snorted. "There's no way Harry is interested in someone like her. She's a klutz."

"I don't know Ginny; she's a metamorphmagus so..." Ron said dreamily.

"Stop being a pervert." Ginny said, whacking her brother upside the head. "You'll see, once we get back to Hogwarts everything will be fine. Then we can try being with the people we like."

"I hope you're right." Ron said not nearly as confident as his sister.

Hundreds of miles away a young blond boy was preparing for what would be his ascend to legendary status in Slytherin. Draco Malfoy

had always been a big shot in Slytherin, mostly thanks to who his father was, but this year was going to be his year. All during summer he had been learning new spells and magic. Not because he was the studious type but rather because he needed to deal with Potter, his rival and archenemy in Hogwarts. Because of him his father had been imprisoned at Azkaban and Draco wasn't about to forget that.

Ever since first year he and Potter had been bitter enemies. It was fated from the moment when Potter got sorted into Gryffindor and as a Slytherin he had a fierce dislike of anyone from Gryffindor. If that was the only thing standing between, they might have gotten along somewhat, maybe even gain some respect for the other, but it wasn't meant to be.

Draco was descended from a Pureblood family, one of the purest to be exact and thus he valued his heritage. While growing up he had been taught that being a Pureblood meant being respected, being better than others and those who weren't Purebloods needed to know their place in society, meaning below the Purebloods. His father had taught him that those Half-Bloods and Mudbloods were to be considered filth and thus deserved to be treated as such.

Having that filth at Hogwarts was a disgrace according to his father and they should either be eradicated or at least being forbidden to learn magic. Sadly this was impossible as Hogwarts accepted everyone, regardless of descend and as long as Dumbledore remained Headmaster that wouldn't change anytime soon.

Draco focused back on his original thoughts, one Harry Potter. All throughout Hogwarts, he had always seen Potter as the one to defeat. He had tried numerous times but had always failed in the end, be it because Potter was better or because of his own fault. This year would be different however as he had also been given a purpose. A mission that he wasn't allowed to fail or he and his parents would suffer greatly.

At the beginning of the summer, the Dark Lord had taken residence at Malfoy Manor for a short while. The Dark Lord was almost never seen but everyone could feel his displeasure. Most of his inner-circle had been arrested and shipped off to Azkaban after the night at the Ministry of Magic. Voldemort had severely punished those that remained and that included both Draco and his mother. Voldemort held Lucius responsible for the failure that exposed him to the

Wizarding World and it was only after several hours of pleading by Draco and his mother that the Dark Lord told them that he wouldn't kill Lucius on the spot once he was free.

Before he left the Manor, Voldemort charged Draco with a mission. He was told that if he succeeded at this mission, not only would his family's honor be restored, they would be accepted as his most trusted and faithful followers. Draco realized that refusing the mission would not only get himself killed but his parents as well. He did the only thing he could do and accepted the mission even without him knowing what it was. When he was told, Draco paled a bit but soon after he thought of what would happen if he actually succeeded.

So he spend the rest of the summer learning magic from the Malfoy Library. His knowledge of spells had doubled and he felt fairly confident about completing his task. It would be dangerous and take a lot of patience and planning but he was sure of himself. He would not fail he promised himself.

'Just you wait Potter.' Draco thought. 'You'll meet your end soon enough and it will be me that will hold that wand that kills you.'

Said Potter was relaxing after a huge meal courtesy of Dobby and together with Tonks, Susan and Hermione; she was discussing what they could do to prepare even more for the war. They had accomplished a lot already but all them knew it was just the beginning. First of all, they needed to expand their numbers but that was easier said than done. Everyone that might want to join needed to be trusted not to betray them. Harry didn't want to make the same mistake her parents had made by trusting the wrong person.

Hermione argued that a lot of their friends could be counted on and that maybe they had to look in their own age group. Harry agreed that Neville, Luna, Fred and George, Ron, Ginny and some other classmates would be reliable but also said that most of them would be unable to join them as they were still at Hogwarts. While it could be useful to have some people inside Hogwarts to keep them informed of what happened in school, that wouldn't really help the war effort just yet.

"I thought Fred and George quit school last year?" Tonks suddenly said. "Didn't you say they left after setting of several pranks at Umbitch's expense?"

"Oh yeah, I forgot about that." Harry nodded. "I wonder how they're doing with that joke shop of theirs?"

"Probably having the time of their lives." Hermione snorted. "Should we write them a letter?"

"We could get Dobby to deliver it." Susan added. "That way we're sure it wouldn't fall into the wrong hands."

"What do you say?" Tonks said to Harry. "It's your decision as you would have to tell them what happened. Are you comfortable doing so?"

"I'm not entirely sure but I'll have to face the music sooner or later." Harry said sighing. "I need to deal with this anyhow. Once we come into the open again, people will know anyhow so I might as well get used to it."

"Okay, then we'll right them a letter later." Tonks said very proud of Harry.

"Oh, I have something I wanted to discuss." Susan said. "After we got here, I took a look around in the library." Here Hermione glared at Susan, who completely ignored the girl. "I was looking for something that might help as I figured that we would fight in a war and I found something interesting."

"What did you find?" Harry asked curiously.

"This." Susan said putting a book in front of her. "A book about rituals."

"Rituals? Susan, that's dark magic." Hermione said appalled. "That's dangerous magic, that is."

"I know and normally I wouldn't even be caught reading this kind of thing but I found several things that could help us." Susan agreed with Hermione. "I know rituals are dangerous and I'm not suggesting

we do the really dangerous ones but there are a few that we could do."

"Okay before we completely discard the use of rituals, can you give us an example?" Tonks said somewhat uncomfortable.

"Sure, how about this one?" Susan said after turning a few pages. "It's a ritual that gives the user a small protection against magic. It's somewhat like how Dragons are magic-resistant thanks to their hide. Only for us, it's our skin that would become magic-resistant. It's not much of course and it won't protect you from being wounded or hurt but every bit of protection can save your life in war."

"That's actually not a bad idea." Hermione admitted.

"I agree." Harry said. "Dark magic or not, this could mean the difference between life or death. Nice work, Susan."

"Thank you." Susan said happy with the praise she received. "There are several more of these rituals in the book. The ones that might help us are pretty harmless compared to some others that are listed inside this book. Still, I think it worth it."

"As long as we don't need to sacrifice twenty virgins or something like that, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to win this war." Tonks agreed. "But best to keep this a secret from the others for now. The older generations are brought up with the notion that every ritual is dark and they won't agree to us using them."

"Alright, how about we write that letter for the twins?" Harry said changing the subject and the others happily agreed. Since Hermione had the prettiest handwriting she was to write it while the other thought up what to say. After an hour of discussions about what to put in the letter, Harry handed it to Dobby and asked them to deliver it to the twins when they were alone. Dobby jumped around, happy to have a job to do, and vanished in a small 'pop'.

Fred and George Weasley were living the dream they had been having ever since the first time they used a prank at the early age of five. Of course the prank was nothing compared to what they did right now but for them it was the beginning of everything. All throughout their lives they had used pranks to amuse themselves and make other people laugh. It was the greatest feeling to see

people enjoy themselves with something they thought up and thus they made it their life goal to open a joke shop that would make everyone laugh with their products.

They had been learning a lot during their time at Hogwarts and used that knowledge to make new pranks and products. Everyone knew that if you needed a laugh, the Weasley twins had what you needed. They were both adored and feared in school for their pranks; some of which had earned them months of detentions. They didn't mind at all, though they tried not to get caught of course. Once they felt confident in the things they came up with, they started planning for opening their own shop. This was a lot harder than they expected as they didn't have the money to finance them. Then Harry Potter had given them his prize winnings from the Triwizard Tournament, saying that the world would need laughter in the coming years. Those thousand Galleons were enough for them to rent a small shop in Diagon Alley, complete with a small apartment upstairs. Now that they had a place for their shop, things started to look better for them.

As they were still at Hogwarts until last year, they had to put their plans on hold for a while. That didn't stop them from preparing for the eventual opening of their shop. Normally they would have waited until they graduated from Hogwarts to open it but when they saw the chance to quit thanks to Umbridge they took it with both hands. Their mother had been furious and wanted them to go back to school now that that foul woman was out of Hogwarts but the twins refused. The shop had now been open for several weeks and did fairly well until the return of Voldemort had been announced to the public. Diagon Alley was now almost deserted and a lot of shops had already closed their business because they were either too afraid to stay in the country or because they couldn't afford to stay open with so little customers.

"Well, time to close for today." Fred sighed. "I was hoping that when the Hogwarts Letters arrive, there would be more business."

"People don't loiter around these days." George agreed.

George closed the door and put the 'Closed' sign in the window. Just like his brother he was somewhat disappointed in how their shop was doing. Though he was sure that if Voldemort wasn't back, things would be a lot different for them. Their pranks and jokes were

famous amongst the students and whenever one came to the shop, they always left with a few things. Still, it was a far cry from what they imagined at the beginning.

"Maybe we should try to open a mailing service?" Fred mused. "People are too scared to come out of their houses. If we could make a catalogue of our stuff and distribute it, they could order by owl."

"Excellent idea, brother mine." George agreed. "I'm glad to see you inherited something else than just ruggedly good looks."

"Of course, twin of mine." Fred said bowing.

Just then a 'pop' was heard behind them and the twins quickly turned around to see what made the noise. Standing there was a familiar House-Elf. Fred and George recognized the little fellow and relaxed. For a minute they thought they were under attack by Death Eaters or something like that.

"Dobby right?" Fred said to the little Elf.

"Dobby is bringing letter from Harry Potter Sir to Mr. Weasy and Mr. Weasy." Dobby said proudly before handing the letter to Fred. "Dobby is to wait for answer."

"Alright Dobby, why don't you take a seat and we'll read the letter." George smiled at the happy little Elf.

"Mr. Weasy is offering Dobby a seat." Dobby said shocked. "Harry Potter Sir has great friends."

The twins laughed at how Dobby seemed to look around the shop for the right spot to sit down. After looking for a few seconds he found the perfect spot and sat down on the counter, his legs dangling back and front as he patiently waited for the twins to read the letter. George broke the wax seal and unfolded the letter with his twin looking over his shoulder so he too could read the letter.

Fred and George,

We hope this letter reaches you well and that the two of you are in good health. We heard about your shop and all of us are very

curious to see what kind of things the two of you have cooked up in those devious little minds of yours. We're sure that the two of you have come up with some amazing things.

Unfortunately this isn't just a letter to ask you how the two of you are doing. We know that you are aware of what happened recently. We're talking of course of our disappearance from the Magical World and from the Order. Trust us when we say that there was a very good reason for this.

We have a proposition for the two of you. We want you to join us and help defending the Wizarding World from Voldemort and his Death Eaters. We know that the two of you might be able to join the order but we think the order just isn't doing what it should be doing. Namely hunting Death Eaters and thwarting Voldemort.

That's where we come in. Together with several others, we have formed a little group that wants to bring the fight to Voldemort and not just react after the attacks have ended. We know it's a dangerous thing to ask and we wouldn't ask if we didn't think that it was necessary for the Wizarding World to survive.

If you agree, please give your answer to Dobby and he'll bring you to us. Don't bother packing anything as he'll bring you back home afterwards. If needed, we have enough rooms for you to stay. We could use those impressive brains of yours to help in defeating Voldemort.

If you don't want to be involved we understand as well, but we ask you to keep it quiet. If the Order or Voldemort knows that we've been in contact with you, there's no saying what might happen.

Cheers,

Harry, Tonks, Hermione and Susan.

To say that Fred and George were surprised was an understatement. They had of course heard about Harry's and Tonks' disappearance from their family in the beginning of the summer. They had been worried about it but in the end there was nothing that they could do about it. So they hoped that wherever they were, they were in good health. Hermione's disappearance several weeks later had confirmed to them that Harry was doing fine as there was no other



place Hermione would vanish to. She would never abandon Harry and if she left, it was to join him.

That Susan Bones was with them as well was a bit of a surprise. Everyone had heard how Voldemort had attacked the Bones' residence recently, only to find it empty. Now Amelia Bones was the new Minister Of Magic, so both Fred and George figured that Harry had something to do with how the Bones' were gone when the Death Eaters arrived.

The twins looked at each other for a moment and without even speaking a word, came to the same conclusion. Harry was right in saying that they probably could have joined the Order now that they were of age. He was also right that the Order, while doing its best, could do little or nothing to prevent attacks. They only reacted once the innocents had suffered already. It wasn't that the Order didn't want to prevent attacks but rather that they were unable to do so as none of them were actually warriors or fighters. Except Kingsley, Tonks, Remus, Dumbledore and a few others, the Order was mostly made up out of ordinary people who wanted to help out against Voldemort. Very brave and deserving of praise but not really helpful in the end.

"Dobby, take us to Harry." Fred and George said together.

Dobby nodded and told them that he would 'pop' them away one at the time. The twins nodded in understanding and in a matter of seconds both of them were standing in an alley, surrounded by buildings. They looked around trying to find out where they were exactly but neither of them recognized the area.

"Dobby will be right back." Dobby said before vanishing.

"Well, that was interesting." Fred said smiling. "Why do I feel like I'm about to fall into a huge prank?"

"Don't know but I feel the same thing." George said before both of them heard Dobby return. They turned and saw a smiling Tonks standing in front of them. She greeted both of them with hug and a 'thank you'.

"Thanks for coming, both of you." Tonks said after hugging them. "Harry will be so happy that you agreed to join us."

"You're welcome." Fred smiled. "There's no way we could sit by and let Voldemort destroy the Wizarding World."

"Yeah, bad for business." George added. "So where are we?"

"You're in Muggle London but everything will be explained inside." Tonks said before giving them a piece of paper. "Please memorize the address."

Fred and George did what they've been told and gasped as two buildings seemed to separate from each other and a new building appeared in between. Tonks led them to the entrance of the building without saying a word but silently enjoying the shocked faces of the twins. Said twins were wondering what just happened but quickly followed Tonks inside. They looked at each other both realizing that this was only the beginning of a very long night.

## Chapter Thirteen: End of Summer

When Fred and George Weasley woke up the next morning they were still stunned and shocked. Everything they had learned the night before was still in front of their minds and would be there for a long time to come. Hearing about Harry and Tonks being a couple was surprising but they could deal with that. Seeing that Harry had been magically transformed into a girl version of himself was not. For the first time in their lives they were stunned speechless. All they could do was stare and gape at Harry's new form, something that had greatly embarrassed said boy-turned-girl. Of course, Tonks and Hermione had to point out that this had to be the first time they saw the twins unable to say a word.

### Flashback

Fred and George had heard a lot already about Tonks and Harry's history and they were laughing like crazy. It was a prank worthy of applause and they told Tonks just that. Tonks thanked them for the praise but said that it wasn't really a prank but more of a necessity to keep their relationship hidden until now.

"We get it Tonks." Fred started.

"Wouldn't want the Harry Potter Fan club to learn that Harry is taken" George added.

"Speaking of Harry, where is he?" Fred continued.

"Yes, where is your charming boyfriend?" George finished. "And Hermione for that matter."

"Oh, Harry is waiting for you downstairs with the rest." Tonks grinned. "Come on, I'll take you to see them."

When the three of them reached the training room, Fred and George immediately recognized Hermione and Susan, who were busy running laps. Four adults were sitting on the benches in what seemed to be a small garden. Fred and George correctly assumed that they were Hermione's and Tonks' parents.

There was however another figure punching away at a sand bag. Neither of them recognized her from Hogwarts, though they did get

a familiar feeling from the girl. She had red hair to her shoulders, looked incredible and seemed to be very strong judging from the way the sandbag moved around after each punch or kick. Looking around for Harry and not finding him, they turned to Tonks.

"Harry, get over here will you?" Tonks shouted announcing their presence.

To the twins' surprise, the red haired girl stopped hitting the sandbag and walked over to them. Their eyes widened in shock as they noticed the scar that made Harry Potter so famous. Their jaws dropped as their eyes looked at the girl approaching, not believing what they were seeing. They turned back to Tonks, maybe to see if they were having their leg pulled but while Tonks smiled, it wasn't a smile indicating that they were victims of another prank. The smile wasn't even aimed at them but at the girl, whom was now standing in front of them.

"Hi Fred, George it's good to see you two." The girl said somewhat uncomfortable.

"...."both Fred and George tried to say something but couldn't get the words out of their mouths. All they could do was gape at the person in front of them. Their eyes roamed from the girl's forehead to her eyes, to her chest and finished at her legs.

"Stop leering at my girlfriend." Tonks said when she noticed them staring at Harry. "I'm the only one that's allowed to do that." To prove it, she stepped towards Harry and kissed her gently.

Fred and George looked on and blushed furiously at the scene in front of them. When the kissing stopped, they still couldn't bring out a word and it was getting embarrassing for both of them.

"Look Harry, this has to be the first time the twins are speechless." Hermione said when she joined them.

"Yes, well Harry does have that effect on people." Susan joked with Hermione.

"I believe that I speak for both of us when I say." Fred started.

"WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?" George yelled.

## End Flashback

It had taken another two hours to explain everything that had happened to Harry at the beginning of the summer. Now that they were aware of Harry's transformation, the twins understood why Harry and Tonks had disappeared right afterwards. They could only imagine what Harry must have felt when he woke up. They had asked to see the memory of the transformation but Harry refused saying that it was still too personal and intimate to show. In fact she didn't want them to see her new form naked and exposed; she allowed it for Hermione and the rest because she knew that she wouldn't believe it otherwise but for guys to see the memory was asking too much. The twins didn't press the point as they could understand Harry's point of view.

Now that they had slept on it for a few hours, they were better prepared to deal with seeing a female Harry at the breakfast table. It still was a little weird but they noticed that Harry felt very insecure about it so they did their best not to make a big deal out of it. That earned them some points with Tonks and Hermione as they appreciated them not staring at Harry. Once breakfast was finished, they turned back to business. Luckily it was a Sunday so the shop was closed today.

"So what exactly are you planning to do?" Fred asked them.

"Well, first of all we need to prepare ourselves." Harry said. "That means getting stronger, learning new magic, learning more about Voldemort and his cronies, gathering information and resources. Once we're ready we'll start taking the fight to them."

"And how do you plan to do that?" George wanted to know.

"Simple, we start taking out Death Eaters." Tonks explained. "Harry and I have been gathering names of Death Eaters, or those planning to become one. If we can take them out before they join Voldemort, we take away some of his power."

"And by 'taking out' you mean killing them?" Fred said not knowing how to feel about that.

"If necessary and if there's no other solution, yes." Harry said convinced. "This war is no joke guys, Death Eaters will kill, torture and rape everyone they can until someone stops them. Don't get me wrong, I'm not looking forward to ending someone's life but if it means that it stops a child from growing up without parents, than that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make. No child should grow up without parents."

"We're looking into ways in order to prevent having to kill. I mean, we can't just kill people who haven't done anything wrong yet, even if they plan to join Voldemort." Hermione said supporting her best friend. "Maybe we can find a way to imprison them somewhere, I don't know but Harry is right. We won't win this war by using stunners. We used that tactic in the Ministry of Magic and we all know what the results were."

"Okay, let's leave that part out for a while." Fred nodded. "What do we do next?"

"Are you joining us?" Harry asked surprised. "Don't you want to think about it first?"

"We thought about it all night long Harry." George smiled. "You're right saying that someone needs to do something against Voldemort. We can't sit by idle when people are getting killed and tortured. I admit it's frightening to think about fighting Death Eaters but it needs to be done."

"What my eloquent twin is trying to say is that we're with you all of the way." Fred added. "We owe you so much already. You saved Ginny from a Basilisk and dad from bleeding to death. The least we can do is help out when you need it."

"Guys, I don't expect anything in return for helping your family." Harry said. "You guys don't owe me anything."

"Isn't that sweet George?" Fred said.

"Indeed it is, Fred, but what young Harry seems to forget is that the Weasley family always pays their debts." George smiled.

"We are friends Harry, and friends help each other out." Fred said to Harry.

"It does not matter to us if you're a boy or a girl." George said moving towards his brother. "We are at your command, oh fearsome leader." They bowed deeply making everyone smile at the silly antics.

"Thanks guys but please get up, you're embarrassing me." Harry said blushing bright red.

"Consider it payback for making us speechless last night." Fred grinned.

"Although I do wonder how our Ronnie and Ginny will react." George mused.

"Oh indeed, mum will be so disappointed." Fred said wondering the same thing.

"She always did want an OBHWF." George nodded.

"She wanted a what now?" Hermione said curious.

"AN OBHWF. Short for One Big Happy Weasley Family." Fred and George said together. "Mum hoped for Harry to get together with Ginny and Ron with Hermione. That way the two of you are really part of the family."

"No offence guys but I'm really not interested in Ginny." Harry quickly said. "I mean, she's a friend but nothing more."

"Yeah, and I'm not interested in Ron in that way either." Hermione said just as quickly. "No offence."

"None taken." The twins smiled at the two of them. "We understand completely. We kind of figured that mum would be disappointed anyway. In fact we always figured the two of you would get together." Fred said looking at Harry and Hermione.

"Us?" Hermione asked. "Why would you think that?"

"Well it's pretty obvious that you are very important to each other." Fred shrugged. "You stood with him when nobody else believed him. He turns to you almost always when he needs help or advice. Harry

on the other hand, has always been very protective of you and everyone knows that if they hurt you, they'll have to answer to him."

"Yep, pretty obvious." George agreed.

"I must say a lot of people in Hufflepuff think the same." Susan admitted. "Of course, they don't know the two of you all that well. It's just that everyone can see how much you care for each other."

"Yes, it's true I care a lot about Harry but I'm not in love with her." Hermione said, blushing a bit. "We're best friends after all, right Harry?"

"Of course." Harry smiled at her.

"Fair enough." George said dropping the matter. "So what happens now?"

"We put our heads together and try to think up things we can do." Tonks said. "The way you guys think up those pranks and jokes, we're sure to come up with something."

"Well, we do have several items that could be used in battle." Fred mused looking at his brother.

"The Peruvian Darkness Powder for example." George said before he explained. "It's a powder that if you throw it in the air, it turns the room instantly dark. Nobody will be able to see a thing."

"Still haven't figured out how to make the user see in the dark though." Fred sighed. "Hit a bit of a snag there."

"Still that's very useful." Tonks said seeing the use of this powder. "We can lay in ambush for them and just fire spells until the darkness clears up; bound to hit a few enemies."

"And they each other." Harry said liking the idea of an ambush. "Any more products like that? What about those portable swamps you guys used in your escape from Hogwarts. Prof. Flitwick was very impressed by those."

"One of my favorites as well." Fred chuckled. "Thought the firework Dragons weren't too bad either."



"It amazes me how you two can come up with such fantastic magic but failed to get good grades at you OWL's" Hermione said shaking her head.

"Probably because we'd lose time to make pranks if we had studied for the OWL's." Fred joked.

"I swear; you two are incorrigible." Hermione exclaimed.

"But you still love us." Fred and George said before grabbing Hermione in a two way hug.

"Get off you me, you prats." Hermione said laughing.

The rest of the morning the twins were introduced to the training schedule and what the other had been learning so far. The twins were in good condition thanks to years of playing Quidditch but they had a bit of trouble with the martial arts training. They too had to be shown how useful it was in battle. Both of them were quickly disarmed by Harry and now show the value of the knowing martial arts.

To everyone's surprise the twins were very knowledgeable in Occlumency something they attributed to having keep all there pranks secret from the teachers. They didn't know they were doing Occlumency but still managed to keep out Snape most of the time when he used Leglimency on them after yet another prank.

"Figured the old bat was trying to read our minds." George shrugged.

"We learned a long time ago not to look him in the beady eyes." Fred answered. "Became very obvious after he caught us after some pranks. Once we learned to keep our thoughts to ourselves he never caught us again."

"At least not when he had no proof it was us." George snickered.

"You two never cease to amaze me." Harry said impressed. "Well, it's a good thing as we'll need to keep everything a secret for now. Don't want Dumbledore or Voldemort to get wind of our operation."

"Dumbledore as well?" Fred asked surprised. "Surely he's one of the good guys?"

"He is but we think he has plans for Harry that we might not agree with." Tonks explained. "He's shown an unhealthy interest in Harry ever since he was born. While the prophecy might have something to do with that, it still leaves us with so many questions that remain unanswered."

"Dumbledore is without a doubt one of the strongest Wizards in the world but he's also very secretive." Harry said. "He knew about how I was destined to face Voldemort but did nothing to prepare me for the fight. While I understand some of the reasons why he kept his mouth shut, it still doesn't explain everything. I know he'll help us out in defeating Voldemort but I want to make sure he doesn't have some crazy plan in mind. I'm not a pawn he can just move around the chess board as he deems fit."

"So for the time being we plan to avoid Dumbledore as much as possible." Hermione said.

"Might be hard to do when you're back at Hogwarts." Fred remarked.

"Yeah, he's been looking for you the entire summer so safe to say he'll want to have a word." George said.

"Guys, I'm not going back to Hogwarts." Harry said knowing she hadn't explained that part yet.

"Neither are we, for that matter." Hermione said for both Susan and herself.

"Oh boy, people will not like that." The twins said. "Especially not Ron and Ginny; they'll want to join you here as well and you all know what mother will say to that."

"We know but it's too difficult for me to go to Hogwarts and deal with all the stares and gossip." Harry said. "Can you imagine what would happen if I walked into the Great Hall in a skirt?"

"Y-Yeah, that might be hard to explain to some folks." George said understandingly.

"You would have to watch your back even more than normally." Fred nodded. "Not to mention dealing with Slytherin students and Snape."

"Exactly, besides I don't think we could learn much useful things at Hogwarts anyway." Susan said. "Hogwarts is a great school but it is unfit to learn how to fight in a war."

"Don't worry Harry; we'll help you deal with mother and our family." Fred and George said.

"Thanks guys, I appreciate it." Harry said sounding relieved. "I think we're going to need it."

When Fred and George went home that afternoon, plans had been made for preparations. While the twins were very crafty and would come up with splendid ideas, they didn't have the means to acquire the necessary goods. Harry came through for them, saying that she would take care of funding everything they needed. Now that they were part of the group she had no problem sharing the money they took from the Muggles. She trusted them to put it to good use. Already the twins had started on producing some very nifty equipment for them to use.

That evening Tonks surprised everyone by inviting them all for a night out. She ensured that as long as they stayed in the Muggle world there was little or no danger of being attacked by Death Eaters. Everyone agreed as they all had been inside way too long. So the entire group decided that they would go have dinner at a fancy restaurant and seeing a movie.

Everyone was dressed to the nines when they left the building and even Harry had agreed to wear a dress-like outfit. So far she had always refused to wear more feminine clothes but Tonks reminded her of her promise. Hermione and Susan had also dressed for the occasion and looked splendid. The parents enjoyed seeing them having a good time and not thinking about the coming hardships for once.

The restaurant had been fabulous and the food exquisite. Susan and Amelia, while not completely out of touch with the Muggle World enjoyed it tremendously as some of the dishes were unknown to them. Harry too, enjoyed the experience as she had never been to

such a fancy restaurant before. It was expensive but for once it didn't matter, they had earned a small break after the few last weeks.

The movie theater was very crowded when they arrived but after a quick voting session they choose a comedy. None of them were in the mood to see an action movie or horror movie as they had enough of that in real life. After getting the tickets from the lady at the booth, the group went to bar to get some refreshments and some snack. Tonks said that popcorn was vital when going to the movies. Harry and Hermione offered to get everyone some popcorn and told them to go ahead to secure some good seats.

While they were waiting in line at the bar, Harry and Hermione were talking about how great the evening had been so far. Hermione smiled at seeing Harry so happy and relaxed for once. Just when it was almost their turn a group of young men came heading their way.

"Good evening ladies." One of them said. "I'm Patrick and I was wondering if you two were willing to join me and my friends."

"Sorry not interested." Harry said waving him off.

"Oh come on, don't be like that." Patrick said. "I'm sure we could show you a good time if you know what I mean?"

"Again, not interested so why don't you leave us alone." Harry said once more. "Go back to your friends."

"Listen here you; don't think you can talk to me like that." Patrick said angry at getting dismissed that quickly. He made a step forward trying to intimidate Harry but it had the opposite effect.

Harry saw him getting closer and figured that if she wanted to get rid of him, she might as well deal with him right away. Before anyone could do anything, Harry's foot left the ground and slammed straight into the man's family jewels. Patrick's eyes bugged out and his knees buckled, making him fall to the ground holding his crushed testicles. The guy's friends saw what happened and tried to rush to their friend's help but the security had seen the commotion and stopped them before dragging them out.

"Let's hope he thinks twice now before bothering another girl." Harry shrugged before she ordered popcorn and drinks for everyone.

Hermione giggled a bit and helped him carry everything to their seats. When they were asked what took them so long, Hermione quickly explained what happened. Tonks laughed and kissed Harry for a job well done while Ted and Dan winced in imaginary pain. Just then the movie started and everyone got quiet and watched the screen. Harry felt Tonks lean into her and she gladly wrapped her arm around her, pulling her closer. She smiled at her and threw her a kiss.

When they got home from the movies, everyone was feeling relaxed and had thoroughly enjoyed the evening. That night even went to bed feeling happy and ready for anything that might come their way. It was instantly decided that they would have several more evenings like that were they could forget the hardships they were facing, even if it was just for one night.

"I had a great time, thank you." Harry said to Tonks.

"You're very welcome, baby." Tonks snuggled closer. "I enjoyed it too. It was fun to just hang out and go on a date."

"When all of this is over, I'll take you out on a real date." Harry said kissing her. "Just you and me; nobody else."

"I'd like that." Tonks smiled. "Goodnight, love."

"Goodnight, love." Harry said closing her eyes while hugging Tonks closer. Both of them fell asleep moments later, the two of them sporting a big smile as they drifted off to sleep.

Earlier that very same day, Ron Weasley was not having a good morning. First of all his mother had pulled him out of bed way too early so he could help clean up Headquarters as everyone was leaving that very evening. Today was the last day of summer and tomorrow morning they would leave for Hogwarts. Ron was not looking forward to starting school again; that was sure. He also wasn't looking forward to having to study for tests and doing homework.

On the other hand he couldn't wait to get out of this place. His entire summer had existed out of doing cleaning chores and being bored out of his mind. It wasn't that he didn't enjoy doing nothing but an

entire summer of being bored was too much, even for him. Things would have been much better if Harry and Hermione had joined him but no, they went off together, leaving him behind. He knew he wasn't being entirely fair as he was sure that there was a very good reason why they had disappeared. Still he would have liked it if they had asked him to join them. Everything was better than having to spend your days cleaning and listening to your mother worrying about your friends.

The other reason why he was having a bad morning was that he was reminded that he still had some summer homework to complete. His mother had nagged him throughout the summer to do it but he always skived off. Now he was going to have to complete three essays in one day. Not a good way to start the school year as he was sure there would be detention waiting for him. Really, how unfair to give students homework during the summer.

So because he still had homework, he was allowed to skip some of his chores. Having almost finished one of the three remaining essays even though he was sure that it wouldn't be a passing grade, he started on the second one. This one was the most dreaded one of the three. It was his potion essay. He was shocked when he learned that he had gained the necessary grade to enter the NEWT level Potion class and of course he had been forced to enroll the class by his parents.

'Great, another two years of Snape.' Ron thought as he read the assignment. Frowning when he couldn't figure out what exactly was being asked he cursed. 'Where's Hermione when you need her?'

In the next room Ginny Weasley was packing her trunk for the coming year. She, contrary to her brother, looked forward to start school again. It would be her fifth year in Hogwarts and that meant OWL's. She knew it would be a stressful year for her as OWL's were the second most important tests for a witch or wizard. Still not even that could destroy her happy mood. Going back to Hogwarts meant seeing her friends again and more importantly, seeing Harry again.

Even though she had tried to get over him, she still liked him. She had tried to follow Hermione's advice and became his friend. That had been going well and she liked it that she could now talk to him without sticking her elbow in the butter dish like she did before. Hermione had told her that in order to get to know Harry, she would

first need to become friends with him. Now that she had done that, she figured she could get closer to him. She wasn't going to push the matter though, she liked Harry but wouldn't force him to do anything.

She vowed to be there for him when he needed her and take things as they came. Besides, she had plenty of admirers in Hogwarts. Not that any of them could hold a candle to Harry but then again, who could? No, she was going to enjoy her year at Hogwarts and try to make the best out of it. If she and Harry got closer then so much the better but she would be his friend first. She was sure that they were a good match so things would work out in the end.

Molly Weasley had nerves of steel. You had to when you have seven children, one more troublesome than the other. But even her nerves were getting tested this summer. With the return of Voldemort, the disappearance of Harry and Hermione, the constant complaining of her youngest two, the stress of not knowing what would happen next and so on was enough to even rattle her. Therefore she couldn't be more happy that Hogwarts was starting again the next day. It wasn't that she was glad to get rid of her children but she could sure do without their constant nagging and complaining. She understood them though, no one liked being holed up in a stuffy old house for the entire summer. It was just that things were too dangerous for them to stay at the Burrow.

Now that the kids would be back at school, she and Arthur decided that they would move back to the Burrow. Albus had raised some very strong wards around the house making it sufficiently protected. They could have stayed there during the summer but like any parents they didn't want to risk anything with their children at home. Now however it was time to return home.

Albus Dumbledore was sitting in his comfy chair in his office thinking about the summer that was about to end. It had been an eventful summer to say the least. First, the acknowledgement of Tom's return had shocked the Wizarding World. When he visited Diagon Alley or the Ministry he could already see the effect the news had on the people. Already fear had driven people to move out of the country and some looked like they had read their own obituary in the newspaper. He had shaken his head when he saw just how easily some people gave into the fear. While it was true that the danger was great, if they just worked together then no Dark Lord could ever

dream of defeating them. Alas, it was not meant to be as the people were as divided as they could be.

After a year of badmouthing him as a senile, old man they now looked at him in hope. They all wanted him to make things better, to deal with Tom and his Death Eaters. Most of them didn't bother to think about how they could help but rather expected him to protect and save them. He would do his best of course but he knew that things didn't work like that. He wasn't vindictive against those who ridiculed and slandered him but he did blame them for being such sheep. All they had to do was stand up and fight but most of the Witches and Wizards in Britain were spineless when it came to war. They talked big when the fighting was over but when push came to shove, most of them hid and cowered expecting others to save them. Sometimes he wondered what would have happened to the Wizarding World if people like him hadn't come thru in the times of need.

Secondly, the disappearance of Harry Potter and Nymphadora Tonks had surprised and scared him as well. He didn't know what had happened and where they had gone off to and that bothered him more than anything. Harry was simply too important for the survival of the Wizarding World, if something happened to him, they were doomed. He had pulled in every member of the Order to find Harry and Nymphadora but to no avail. No matter what they did or where they looked, they were unable to find any trace of them. The only reassurance they had was that Tom had no clue to Harry's location as well.

After the attack on Amelia Bones, the disappearance of Hermione Granger and her parents, he suspected that Harry had his hands in both events. His suspicions were proven correct when Amelia contacted him, announcing her candidacy for Minister of Magic. This brought hope to his heart as he was sure that Amelia would be a dedicated leader, not in it for the money or the power the office represented. When he listened to her story, he knew Harry was doing fine wherever he was but he still needed to get him back. It was just too dangerous for Harry to be out there alone.

Now, the last day of summer had arrived and he had to concentrate on the coming school year. During the summer he had managed to get Horace Slughorn to come back out of retirement to teach potions. It hadn't been easy to convince the man but some subtle bribing and



blackmailing had done the trick. Knowing just how much Horace feared Tom, he offered him the best protection available at Hogwarts. That several heirs to prominent families were to be in his class had helped as well. The real reason why he wanted Horace to teach this year, was because he was sure Horace knew something about Tom. Something that might be the key to victory but the man was stubbornly keeping silent on the subject. No matter what he did or said, Horace refused to comment on it. Still, he needed that information and hoped that Horace would change his mind; otherwise he would have to resort to different tactics.

Dumbledore took one of his adored lemon drops and closed his eyes. He was tired and getting old. He knew that he wouldn't survive this war. He had been through enough wars and battles to know that. Still, he wouldn't let Tom get his way. If he died it would be fighting the Dark Side just like he had done his entire life. He smiled as he thought about how starting tomorrow, the halls of Hogwarts would once more be filled with magic. Seeing the next generations grow up always brightened his days. It gave him hope for the future and a reason to fight. If anything, he would fight so those children could grow up in a world without death and misery.

## Chapter Fourteen: No Hogwarts this year?

Like the years before, the Weasley family had to hurry to make it to King's Cross Station in time. It was as if having to hurry had become tradition to them. Even now when they only had two children at Hogwarts, chaos ruled the Burrow that morning. Arthur Weasley had long given up trying to change things in his home. He patiently waited in the kitchen, reading the Daily Prophet, until everyone was ready to go.

When they finally arrived, the train was scheduled to leave in just a few minutes so hasty goodbye's were given. There was no time to have long farewells as almost everyone else had boarded the train already. Ron groaned as it would be a pain to find Harry and Hermione on the train. He didn't look forward to checking every compartment for them. After receiving some last lecture about staying out of trouble, the doors closed and slowly the train puffed out of the station.

"Well, I'm going to find Harry and Hermione." Ron said dragging his trunk behind him.

"I'll see you later." Ginny said spotting some of her classmates and went to say hello.

Ron looked for almost half an hour and still hadn't found any trace of Harry and Hermione. So far he had run into Dean and Seamus, Lavender and Katie Bell but none of them had seen his friends. He had also past Malfoy and his goons but surprisingly, Draco ignored him and simply walked by as if he hadn't seen him. If Ron hadn't been so preoccupied with finding Harry and Hermione, he would have called out about it. He heard some familiar voices and opened the door of the compartment. When he looked inside he saw Luna 'Looney' Lovegood and Neville Longbottom sitting there.

"Hello Ronald." Luna said barely looking up from the Quibbler she was reading. "How was your summer?"

"Euh, pretty boring." Ron said. "Hey, have you seen Harry or Hermione somewhere? I've been looking all over for them."

"No, we haven't seen them." Neville answered. "We're the last compartment of the train so if you haven't seen them elsewhere,

then they aren't on the train. I was looking for them as well on the platform but didn't find them. I was here early enough to see everyone arrive but I never saw them come through the portal."

"Are you serious?" Ron exclaimed. "Where the hell could they be? They disappeared early this summer and nobody has seen them since then."

"Hold on, Harry and Hermione disappeared?" Neville asked surprised. "Why haven't we heard of this until now?"

"Look, I'm not supposed to talk about it but I guess I can tell you two." Ron winced at his slip. "Just keep it quiet."

"It won't be a secret much longer if they aren't at Hogwarts." Neville countered.

Ron nodded in agreement and told them everything he knew, which wasn't much. Neville and Luna were shocked to hear that Harry and Hermione had disappeared without a trace. Both of them had their own ideas about what could have happened. Luna's had something to do with some magical creature, while Neville was analyzing things more rationally.

"So you haven't heard from them at all?" Neville asked.

"Nothing. Not a damn letter." Ron said angry.

"Something must have happened for them to leave like that." Neville said more to himself than to Ron. "They wouldn't abandon us like that without a very good reason."

"There had better be a good reason otherwise I'm going to be pissed." Ron muttered.

Elsewhere Hermione Granger was feeling somewhat down. While she didn't regret staying with Harry, she had looked forward to another year at Hogwarts. She loved riding the Hogwarts Express, filled with anticipation of what she was going to learn. For Hermione, Hogwarts had been the single best thing that had happened to her. It was there that she had met her best friend, learned so many wonderful things and she loved it. Not going to Hogwarts this year

was a decision she had made to help Harry and she didn't regret it for one moment but she was still going to miss it.

"Are you okay, sweetie?" Emma Granger asked.

"I'm fine mum; it's just that the train would leave just about now." Hermione sighed. "It's weird not being on it, that's all."

"I know; it's been so long since we first saw you off in first year." Emma said grabbing her daughter in a hug. "I still remember how proud and sad I was at the same time. My little baby girl was all grown up and ready to go out on her own. I was so proud of you."

"Thanks mum." Hermione said, blushing a bit.

"And I'm even prouder now." Emma continued. "Your father and I couldn't have asked for a more wonderful child. Promise me you'll be very careful when you go and fight these monsters."

"Don't worry mum, Harry will be with us and she'll keep all of us safe." Hermione said reassuring her mother.

"She's a special person isn't she?" Emma nodded. "After everything she's been through, she still stands tall and keeps on going. Most people would have given up a long time ago. I included."

"I know." Hermione smiled. "But not Harry, not when people are counting and depending on her. She's the strongest person I ever met. Huh, it's so weird that we've already come to think of Harry as a 'her', when not two months ago she was still a boy."

"Well, imagine how it must be for Harry." Emma said. "It must have been some shock, waking up as a girl. I can't imagine how that must feel."

"Luckily Tonks was there." Hermione said happily. "I wished I could have been there but I know now that Tonks was the only one who could have helped Harry get through this. Those two really love each other, don't they?"

"I don't think I have ever seen two people loving each other more than them." Emma nodded. "It's a beautiful thing to see."

"I hope to experience that someday as well." Hermione said longingly.

"I'm sure you will baby girl." Emma smiled. "Now, how about some breakfast?"

"Sounds great." Hermione said following her mother upstairs.

Harry woke up with someone firmly holding him. Turning her head she could only smile at the sleeping face of lover. Tonks had the cutest expression on her face when she slept. It was an expression of complete contentment and happiness. When Harry looked at her, she couldn't help but feel happy and loved. She twisted around, so that she would face Tonks and breathed in her scent. This was without a doubt the most favorite part of the day to her. Waking up like this felt like bliss each and every time again.

While she was laying there, Harry couldn't help but think how much her life had changed since the end of last school year. The death of Sirius was still heavy on her heart but thanks to Tonks and her friends, she had been doing much better now. With her transformation into a girl on top of that, she sure she wouldn't have lasted through the summer without Tonks. Luckily, she could count on them to help her whenever she had a moment where things got too much for her. It had happened a few times already but those moments seemed to come less and less. Harry figured she was finally accepting of everything that had happened since that faithful night fifteen years ago. It had taken her so long to accept all of it but now that she had, it was time to heal and move on.

Tonks stirred slightly and opened her eyes. When she peered into the green eyes of Harry she smiled and snuggled closer. No words needed to be said for now as both understood what the other felt. It was enough for both of them to simply be together like this to realize just how much they loved each other. Tonks reveled in feeling her girlfriend's naked skin against hers. It was amazing just how much a simple touch or look could melt her heart and turn her on at the same time. She wished they could stay in bed forever but sadly that was impossible.

"What's on your mind?" Tonks asked Harry.

"Well, other than how absolutely adorable you are when you sleep?" Harry grinned. "Just that today we normally leave for Hogwarts."

"I know but can I tell you something?" Tonks said smiling when Harry nodded. "I'm glad you don't have to leave. I don't think I could stand waking up and not having you next to me."

"Yeah, me too." Harry laughed. "You may hog the covers and snore but..." here she was cut off as Tonks started pinching her sides.

"I DO NOT SNORE!" She said menacingly. "Take that back."

"No can do." Harry laughed as Tonks started tickling her sides.

What followed was a brief fight, with Tonks winning, and a lovemaking session that both of them enjoyed very much. When both of them were spend, they looked at clock and saw that it was already around nine am. Deciding that they better get up, they quickly took a shower and headed downstairs to the kitchen. No doubt everyone else had already eaten breakfast.

Like they thought, everyone was already assembled in the kitchen having breakfast and talking happily. Susan looked in a very good mood and so did Amelia for once. Lately she had been somewhat in a bad mood. She explained that she was frustrated with how things in the Ministry were going. She had hoped to get things under control quickly but that was too optimistic. She found out very quickly that people didn't appreciate radical changes that well and she resigned herself to the fact that things would take much longer than expected.

Hermione and her parents were talking to Ted and Andromeda Tonks about something but Harry didn't really pay attention. She was busy trying to get Dobby to calm down and put less food on her plate. If Dobby had his way, she would weigh over two hundred pounds by now. Tonks enjoyed every minute of it until Dobby turned on her as well. All in all, everyone seemed to be in a good mood.

"So what's planned for today?" Tonks asked them after everyone finished breakfast.

"Well, I'm headed for work as there's still much to be done." Amelia said. "Plus point is that maybe today we might see some progress."

I've managed to get Mad-Eye Moody to come and whip our Aurors into shape. With his help we might have some decent Aurors by Christmas."

"That's good news Amelia." Harry agreed.

"It's a start." Amelia nodded. "Still, there's so much to be done. It's going to take at least a year to get rid of Fudge's screw-ups. Did you know that idiot practically bankrupted the entire Ministry of Magic? The fool pushed through so many reforms and regulations that benefited only a few and harmed all the rest. I wouldn't be surprised if he filled his own pockets with that money. I shouldn't have let him leave like that."

"Don't beat yourself up about Amelia." Andromeda said. "He's not worth it. I, for one, am happy that we finally have a sensible leader now. It might take a while but I'm sure that things will work out fine in the end."

"Andy is right." Ted said. "It's no use complaining about what's done, we need to get past that and do what's necessary. Screw those who don't like it, just do what you need to do to ensure the wellbeing of the rest of the Wizarding World."

"Thank you both. I will do just that." Amelia said touched by the support she received. She got up and kissed Susan on the cheek, wished everyone a nice day and left for the Ministry of Magic.

"Oh Amelia, I think you can expect Dumbledore to pay you a visit." Tonks yelled after her.

"Oh?" Amelia said stopping at the door. "Why's that?"

"As soon as he hears that neither Harry, Hermione nor Susan are on the train, he'll want to know why." Tonks said. "As you are the only person he knows that has been in recent contact with us, it's safe to say he'll come and talk to you."

"Great, just what I needed." Amelia muttered. "Thanks for the heads up. I'll deal with it, don't worry."

Harry told the rest that she wanted to work on her Occlumency for a while so she went straight to the mediation garden. Tonks,

Hermione and Susan decided that they would leave Harry to work in peace and chose to go through the library in search for some new things to learn. Well, actually Tonks and Susan went to the library and got the books while Hermione was forced to wait outside.

'Only a few more days and this stupid punishment is over.' Hermione mentally said. 'This is so unfair.'

When Tonks and Susan returned they had books on almost every subject Hogwarts taught. Hermione practically drooled at the sight of the rare and ancient tomes but managed to restrain herself from squealing in excitement. Tonks had enough teasing material as it was. Each of them choose a book and started looking for something they could learn.

In the meanwhile Harry was building her mindscape. It seemed the last time had been a fluke as it was a lot more difficult this time. Building the next few floors would take weeks at this rate but Harry knew she couldn't force the issue. Better to take her time and do it right than having Voldemort enter her head due to a hurried up job. So, she focused on making the building extra strong. She was pretty confident that she had enough time as she hadn't felt an inkling of Voldemort's presence ever since her transformation. No, that wasn't true. She hadn't felt him since that night in the Department of Mysteries where he had tried to possess her. Ever since that time it seemed Voldemort had given up on trying to access her mind thru their connection. Harry briefly wondered if her transformation had something to do with that but decided not to think about. She had an apartment building to construct.

When she next opened her eyes, Harry noticed that it was almost noon and had been meditating for almost three hours. Thinking that she had done enough for the day she went in search for Tonks and the rest. She found them each huddled over a book in the living room. A whole stack of untouched books placed on the table caught her eye and she wondered over to them. She briefly took Tonks' hand in hers and gave her a kiss to greet her. Tonks smiled at her and returned to her book.

"Not that I want to interrupt anything but it's almost time for lunch." Harry said softly.



"Huh? Already?" Susan said surprised. "Wow, time does go fast when you're having fun."

"Reading is fun?" Harry asked amused.

"Honestly Harry, these are wonderful and rare books you have here." Hermione said annoyed. "Where did you get all of these?"

"Oh, we asked Dobby to get the oldest tomes and books out of Grimmauld Place one night." Tonks answered that question. "Since everyone was told to keep out of the Black Library by Molly, nobody really noticed that dozens of books vanished."

"You didn't?" Hermione said shocked.

"Why not? I mean, I'm pretty sure Sirius left everything to me." Harry said softly. "They're mine so why not use them. The Order doesn't seem to have any need for them so might as well take advantage of the knowledge we have at our disposal."

"Good idea, Harry." Susan said while Hermione nodded with a sad smile on her face. "I wonder what kind of books the Bones Library has to offer. I'm pretty sure we have some rare volumes as well, although nothing as dark as some of these. Definitely nothing on rituals."

"You should ask you aunt if there's something of use to us." Tonks said pulling Harry into her lap. "There's plenty of powerful light oriented magic as well. Who knows what kind of magic can be found? If you look at the kind of magic discussed in these books, we can already see how much we have forgotten or how much has been branded as Dark Magic by the previous and current Ministry of Magic."

"Personally, I'm not too keen on learning magic that can hurt people." Hermione said. "Don't get me wrong, I'll learn how to defend myself and others but I'd prefer to be on the sidelines."

"That's perfectly fine Hermione." Harry said to her. "Perhaps you can learn some healing magic or something like that? We're definitely going to need someone who's able to patch us up sooner or later."

"Healing magic huh?" Hermione said intrigued. "I like it; maybe I'll do that then."

"Great, you'll be the best healer ever." Harry said meaning every word making Hermione blush at the praise. "What about you Susan? Any field you like best?"

"Hmm, I don't really know." Susan said thinking. "I guess I'm more the support type as well. I like brewing potions and I'm fairly good at it so maybe I'll take on the role of Potion Mistress and support."

"Awesome." Tonks said. "Well, since I'm already an Auror that means I'm the fighting type. I'll focus on that; I need to learn more offensive magic though. Work on my clumsiness a bit too." She added silently in the end.

"Hey, you're not clumsy." Harry said to her. "You kick our asses every day so don't put yourself down like that. If I'm not allowed to brood, then you can't be like that either."

"Fair enough." Tonks smiled giving Harry a quick kiss. She knew Harry still felt somewhat embarrassed to show affection in front of Hermione and Susan.

"What do you want to learn Harry?" Hermione asked her.

"Well, I was very impressed with how Dumbledore fought Voldemort." Harry said thinking back. "He primarily used a style made out of Transfiguration, Charms and Conjuring to fight. I would like to be able to do something like that. I'm pretty good at Transfiguration and Charms so might be a good idea to mix that with some Battle Magic."

"We brought some books on Transfiguration." Susan said pointing to the stack of books. "Maybe you can find something there?"

"I'll take a look after lunch." Harry said.

She then pulled Tonks out of her seat and told them that it was time for lunch. Hermione had been convinced that she needed to eat but in the end she gave up and followed them as well. Tonks and Susan teased her that the books would still be there after lunch making her

pout. Harry just consoled her by saying she understood how difficult it was to stop doing something you liked.

Amelia had just finished a meeting/lunch with Kingsley where they had discussed his investigation of the Delores Umbridge. He had already found out several criminal offences and he hadn't even started on her time at Hogwarts. The most noticeable one was that, while there were no written statements found yet, she had ordered two Dementors to go after Harry Potter last summer. While Amelia was already aware of that particular tidbit of information, Kingsley was not and he was understandably upset.

Other than that he had uncovered several cases of bribery, blackmail, extortion and intimidation against several employees of the Ministry. Most of those employees were people who dared express their dissatisfaction with Fudge and his entourage. Some of them had been forced to resign or had been given a low level and menial job for the audacity they had shown at questioning their leaders. Their original jobs had been given to supporters of Fudge whether they were competent for the job or not. Amelia asked Kingsley to give her a list of all the affected people so that she could either give them back their old jobs, if possible, or give them compensation.

'No wonder people are starting to lose faith in their leaders.' Amelia thought disgusted.

Unfortunately, Kingsley hadn't been able to question Delores just yet as she was still at St-Mungo's for treatment. He had asked the Healers if there was any progress in her mental state but so far she was still unresponsive to any of the Healers treatments. The Healer in question said that he had never seen such a case before and that it was highly unlikely that she would come out without any lasting damage. Whatever had happened in the Forbidden Forest had practically destroyed her mind. Kingsley thought it was a fitting punishment for the foul woman.

Amelia agreed.

She was just about to start on the next batch of paperwork when Percy Weasley barged into her office telling her that none other than Albus Dumbledore was there to see her. Percy said that he had tried to tell him that she was unavailable but the man wouldn't take no for

an answer. Amelia sighed already knowing why Albus was here for. She told Percy to let him in.

"Albus, this had better be good." Amelia said when the Headmaster entered her office. "I'm very busy as you are well aware."

"I know and I'm sincerely sorry for bothering you but this is of the outmost importance." Dumbledore said.

"And what might be so important?" Amelia said playing along.

"Well as you might know, as Headmaster I'm well aware of who rides on the Hogwarts Express." Dumbledore started. "It's one of the security measures you see. When students ride the train for the very first time they are given a magical trace, so to speak. That trace is unique to the student and allows the teachers and the Headmaster to know if all students are on board or not."

"Yes, I'm familiar with that trace." Amelia nodded.

"So you can imagine how shocked I was when I noticed that three particular students were not aboard the Hogwarts Express." Dumbledore said.

"I have an idea yes." Amelia smiled.

"Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Susan Bones were the only missing students on the train." Dumbledore continued without reacting to Amelia's smile. "Perhaps you can give me some more information?"

"I'll tell you this much, Albus. None of these three students will be attending Hogwarts for the time being." Amelia explained.

"Amelia, surely you can't say you agree with this." Dumbledore said surprised. "They're students and thus should attend."

"No, they don't Albus." Amelia disagreed. "All three of them have passed their OWL's and are thus allowed to discontinue or postpone taking their NEWT's. There's no law that says that you have to take NEWT level classes; most do as it is advisable to take them if you

want a better job than just being a store clerk or paper pusher. However, they are well within their rights to quit school."

"Surely you want Susan to take her NEWT's?" Dumbledore said not believing what he was hearing. It was rare that students quit after taking their OWL's and mostly then it was because of the financial cost.

"Of course I want Susan to get her NEWT's." Amelia said angry. "And she will, as soon as Voldemort has been dealt with. For now she's safer where she is."

"And where is that exactly?" Dumbledore asked knowing that she wouldn't tell him.

"All you need to know is that she's safe." Amelia smiled.

"What about Harry and Hermione?" Dumbledore sighed. "I can't believe that Miss Granger would throw away her future like that."

"She would if it means keeping Harry safe." Amelia disagreed again. "Hermione has chosen to stay with Harry and support him. Harry knows that he needs to learn how to defend himself from Voldemort. As his best friend, Hermione and her parents are prime targets for an attack so they decided that it was safer to stay hidden as well."

"So that's why she disappeared." Dumbledore nodded. "It's a thought that I have had as well. Tom would surely use Harry's friends to hurt him, he's done so before. But Amelia, they're still children. They don't need to fight right now. They should let the adults handle things."

"You're wrong about that." Amelia said. "Those kids, as you call them, are already adults. Especially Harry and Hermione, they've seen too many things already. Besides, why should they have faith in adults to take care of things. Have you not seen what kind of mess we adults made of everything? They want to rely on themselves and frankly, I agree. When I see them together, I know that if things go bad for me, Susan will be able to take care of herself. She's surrounded by friends and she won't be alone if something happens to me."

"While I sympathize with you Amelia, I need Harry to attend Hogwarts." Dumbledore insisted.

"Oh really? Why is that?" Amelia said narrowing her eyes.

"I need to prepare Harry for what is to come." Dumbledore said. "There's little time left."

"Just minutes ago you said that they should leave things to the adults but now you insist that you need to prepare Harry." Amelia said shaking her head. "Which one is it?"

"Harry is a special case." Dumbledore explained. "I need him at Hogwarts for reasons I cannot explain but I assure you that it's imperative that he learns these things."

"Sorry Albus but I'm afraid there's no way that Harry will attend Hogwarts." Amelia shook her head. "Whatever it is you need to teach him will have to be done in another way. I suggest you look into that."

"Amelia please." Dumbledore asked. "Just tell me where Harry is hiding and I'll explain everything to him in person."

"Again, I'm sorry Albus but I cannot." Amelia said sternly. "Even if I could, I wouldn't betray Harry's trust like that. I can tell he's someone who doesn't trust easily and I have been privileged to be one of the those few; I'm not about to betray that privilege." She saw his eyes widen at her words and she knew he had figured it out.

"The Fidelius." He breathed. "Harry is hiding under the Fidelius Charm."

"That's right. So you know it's no use asking me tell you where he is." Amelia nodded.

"Very well, it seems I have no choice in the matter." Dumbledore sighed. "If you would please give him a message from me? Tell him that I need to speak with him urgently. What I have to teach him is undeniably the key to defeating Voldemort."

"If you are so sure about this, then why keep this a secret for so long." Amelia asked angry. "Why didn't you forward this information sooner? We could've taken care of Voldemort by now if you did."

"It's not that simple Amelia." Dumbledore explained. "I have only recently discovered proof of my suspicions. We cannot risk exposing ourselves too soon as Tom will surely be aware if we mess up. If he learns what we know, he will take steps to prevent us from reaching our goal. I honestly believe that Harry is the only one who can defeat Tom, and it's not just because of what the prophecy says."

"Keeping secrets like that could bite you in the ass later, Albus." Amelia sighed. "Very well, I will pass on the message. However, it's up to Harry to decide whether he agrees to speak to you or not. I will not force this issue, I'm sure he will come see you when he deems the time is right."

"I understand." Dumbledore said understanding. "I'd best get back to Hogwarts. Thank you for your time Amelia."

"Good day, Albus." Amelia said watching the old Headmaster walk out of her office. When she watched him leave she noticed just how tired and old the man seemed to have gotten compared to last year. It seemed as not even the great Albus Dumbledore could stop the effects of growing old. The man was reaching his hundred and twenties after all. With that thought she returned to her paperwork, cursing once more the mess Fudge and his administration had left behind.

Later that afternoon Harry and her friends were practicing some magic while Hermione's and Tonks' parents looked on. To Dan and Emma, who hadn't been able to see much of the magical world until now, seeing them perform magic was always a treat. Emma was the most fascinated with it and Ted and Andromeda were already used to having to answer her questions. Right now, they were watching as Hermione cast the Patronus Charm and her beautiful otter manifested in front of them.

"Oh my god, that's so beautiful." Emma gushed. "What kind of spell is that?"

"That's the Patronus Charm." Andromeda explained. "Very advanced magic if I might say so. It's a protection spell against Dementors, although it can be used for other purposes as well."

"Dementors? Those are the creature that can suck your soul out, right?" Dan said remembering the kids talking about those horrible creatures.

"That's right." Andy nodded. "Very nasty business, those are. Some of the foulest magical beings in the Magical World." Andy said turning back to the kids. She saw that Harry was about to cast the spell. "Oh Harry is about to cast the charm, it should be interesting. Tonks told us just how amazing her Patronus is."

Harry had her eyes closed and tried to bring up a happy memory in order to cast the Patronus. Recently she had been having trouble casting it and couldn't get more than a wisp of smoke whenever she tried to bring out her Patronus. It wasn't surprising as her mind was in such turmoil that casting the spell successfully was almost impossible. Now however she felt like she might be able to do so.

She thought back at all the wonderful times she had spent with Tonks. Bringing the memory of that mornings lovemaking session to the front of her mind and hearing Tonks say the words she longed to hear for so long when she was young, was more than enough to cast a thousand Patronus Charms. Her eyes snapped open and with a 'Expecto Patronus' the room lit up in a white light, almost blinding everyone.

When their eyes adjusted they looked on at the majestic Patronus. Those who knew what Harry's Patronus looked like, stared in shock at the new form of the Patronus. Instead of the impressive stag, known as Prongs, there was now a silver white Phoenix flying around the room looking for any threats or danger. Harry watched, both in horror and shock at the Phoenix. Her concentration broke and the Phoenix faded quickly. Before anyone could comment Harry ran out of the room, with Tonks following her.



## Chapter Fifteen: Another blow to the system

Everyone was still seeing spots from the blinding light when they saw Harry run out the room. The adults looked at each other not understanding what had just happened. They turned to Hermione and Susan only to see Hermione with a tear running down her cheek. Emma hurried over to her daughter worried.

"What happened?" Emma asked worried to Hermione. "What's wrong, sweetie?"

"Mum, that Patronus wasn't Harry's normal one." Hermione said sadly. "Her Patronus was a stag, just like the Animagus form of her father. Harry loved her Stag Patronus because it was something that reminded her of her dad. To her it was a link with him, something that connected them and now that link is gone. Harry must be devastated."

"Oh no, poor Harry." Susan said worried.

Harry ran straight to her room and collapsed on her bed, tears running down her cheeks. She couldn't help it, it was just not fair. One of the few things that she had in common with her dad was gone now. She cried uncontrollably until she felt Tonks picking her up and holding her gently. Harry just crawled into Tonks' embrace and let the tears flow. Tonks just held her knowing just how sad her lover was at the moment. After ten minutes, Harry had calmed down enough for the crying to be reduced to small hiccups. Tonks grabbed a washcloth and gently cleaned Harry's dried tears of her face.

"Better now?" She asked gently.

"Y-yeah, thanks." Harry nodded. "I'm sorry, it was just...."

"No need to be sorry, baby." Tonks said hugging Harry. "I know how much you love Prongs."

"He's gone Tonks." Harry said sadly. "Prongs' gone. Why does this happen to me? I only have a few things to remember my dad and Prongs was one of them." Tears started running down her cheeks again. "And now he's gone too. It's not fair."

"I know, baby." Tonks said gently rocking the smaller girl. She continued until she noticed that Harry had fallen asleep in her arms. She lay down and untangled herself, covering Harry with the blanket. She kissed her forehead and quietly exited the room. She quickly wiped a few tears out of her own eyes; inside she had to be the strong one but now she could let go. After recomposing herself she went downstairs, knowing that Hermione and the others must be worried.

"Tonks, how's Harry?" Hermione asked as soon as entered the room.

"She's a mess, like you'd expect." Tonks said sadly. "Just when things started to get better, this happens."

"But why has it changed forms?" Susan wanted to know. "Does that happen a lot?"

"Not that I'm aware of but as the Patronus is a reflection of the caster's feelings and inner state, it's possible." Hermione said trying to recall everything she had read about that particular charm. "Harry has been through so much lately and maybe her Patronus changed as a result."

"The Phoenix has long been presented as a symbol of rebirth, immortality, and renewal." Emma added to her daughter's statement.

"Rebirth huh?" Tonks said thinking. "I guess you could say that Harry has been reborn earlier this summer. She 'died' as a boy and was 'reborn' a girl. Could it be that this was the trigger?"

"It surely is possible." Andromeda said.

"Still, that Patronus was one of the strongest pieces of magic I have ever seen." Ted said very impressed. "No wonder her Patronus was able to scare off a hundred Dementors. The sheer power of it made my skin tingle. For one so young to cast such a powerful spell, it's breathtaking."

"I agree." Andromeda said. "I could feel the Magic in the air and looking at it was hurting my eyes a bit. So bright and powerful; I doubt many could do the same."

"While that may be true, I just hope this doesn't ruin Harry's progress again." Tonks said sadly. "She was doing so well; for this to happen, it might set us back weeks."

"I'm sure everything will turn out fine." Emma said. "Harry is strong. She won't let this beat her down for long, I'm sure of it. She's the strongest person I've ever met and while she might be sad for a while, she'll come out on top again."

"I hope you're right Emma." Tonks said smiling a bit. "I really do."

It wasn't until later that afternoon, close to dinner time that Harry came out of her room. She looked still somewhat sad but she had at least stopped crying. She smiled at Tonks showing that she was okay, which made Tonks smile in return. She walked over to her and kissed Harry gently, telling her how much she loved her. Harry eagerly returned the kiss and hugged Tonks close to her.

"I'm okay." Harry said before anyone asked. "I'm sad Prongs is gone but I know that my link with my parents will never really fade. The true link is here." She said placing her hand on her heart. Everyone was relieved to hear Harry say those words. Tonks kissed Harry gently and hugged her close.

Ron Weasley had always enjoyed the opening feast of the Hogwarts school year. This year however had to be the worst opening feast ever he thought. First of all, Harry and Hermione weren't there and already he had been bombarded with questions on their whereabouts. Rumors were already spreading around about Harry and Hermione eloping and leaving the Wizarding World, leaving him behind.

Then Severus Snape had been appointed DADA professor while some fat guy was the new Potion teacher. Ron sighed knowing that DADA was going to be one of his least favorite subjects this year. Once the feast was done and everyone had been sent to the common rooms, Ron had been asked at least a hundred times where his best friends were and what they were doing. Unable to answer any of their questions, people soon left him alone.

Luckily Neville, Dean and Seamus were there to keep him company otherwise he would have been sitting there alone. He was worried about his best friends and wondered what the rest of the year would

bring. Without Harry and Hermione he would be pretty lonely he realized. Seeing his three classmates talking, he joined them figuring he might as well get to know them better.

Elsewhere Albus Dumbledore was informing the Order that Harry, Hermione and Susan weren't aboard the Hogwarts Express and that, according to Amelia, none of them had any intention of attending Hogwarts this year. When he finished his sentence, pandemonium broke out. People started shouting that they had been abandoned by Harry; that they should try to find him and bring him back, that they should try and contact him to find out what had happened.

"I knew it." Molly Weasley raged. "That woman corrupted Harry and Hermione. I should have kept her away from poor Harry last summer. She must have taken advantage of him."

"Who are you talking about Molly?" Remus asked.

"Tonks, of course." Molly said angry. "I told you all that she was up to something but none of you believed me. Now look at what happened."

"How dare you accuse Tonks of doing something like that?" Kingsley said. "I'll have you know that Amelia has been in recent contact with Tonks and Harry. If something was going on that might harm Harry, she would have done something about it. Besides, Tonks is one of the most amazing people I've ever met so don't you dare badmouth her like that."

"I agree with Kingsley." Remus said. "Tonks cares deeply for Harry. They're friends who look out for each other."

"Be that as it may, I'm sticking to what I said." Molly argued. "Something is going on and I don't like it."

"Molly, I told you before not to jump to conclusions." Albus sighed. "We all know how much you care for Harry and how you consider him like your own son but not everyone has ulterior motives when it comes to Harry. We all care for him and want to see him safe."

"So what do we do now?" Remus asked Albus.

"I asked Amelia to pass on a message to Harry." Albus explained.

"Why not simply ask where Harry is?" Molly asked.

"I did that but she's unable to tell us Harry's location." Albus said patiently. "And before you ask, Harry is hiding under a Fidelius Charm so no matter how many times we ask the answer will always be the same."

"How did they manage to cast such a high level charm?" Arthur said impressed. "It's a most difficult spell even for us adults."

"I always suspected that Harry is much more resourceful than he let appear." Albus smiled with pride. "It wouldn't surprise me if Harry kept several more secrets from us. Harry has often proved himself to be an exceptional wizard. I suspect he always held back in order not to draw any more attention to himself."

"Still, the Fidelius Charm is not something he should be able to cast." Remus said.

"You all seem to underestimate Tonks and what she's capable of." Kingsley growled. "None of you have ever seen her in battle. Tonks is a powerful Witch; she's smart and a quick thinker. Her intelligence might even rival Hermione's. Just because she's clumsy at times, you all think of her as weak. You couldn't be farther from the truth; Tonks is stronger than three fourths of the Aurors in the Ministry."

"You're exaggerating." Another member of the Order said. "She's as clumsy as they get. How many times hasn't she tripped over that stupid umbrella holder in the hallway?"

"Oh really?" Kingsley said. "Well, then next time you see some Aurors you should ask them who holds one of the top spots amongst them. They'll all tell you that Tonks is one of the strongest. Almost none of them dare to fight her, not after what happened after Pant's-Wetter Bill."

"Who's Pant's-Wetter Bill?" Bill Weasley asked curious.

"One of the fools who thought he could try and take advantage of her Metamorph skills." Kingsley said. "The idiot still runs whenever she's around. I don't have to tell how he got that name do I?"

"You're saying that he...." Remus started chuckling.

"Yep, I don't exactly know what she did but every time he sees her he wets himself." Kingsley nodded. "Been going on for years now."

"While all of that is very interesting, it doesn't help us to speak with Mr. Potter and Miss Granger." McGonagall said sternly.

"Quite right Minerva." Dumbledore said. "For now let's see how things evolve. There's nothing we can do right now any way. As Amelia pointed out to me this afternoon, Harry is perfectly allowed to choose not to attend NEWT classes. There's no law that forces anyone to take NEWT's."

"At least he's safely hidden." Remus nodded.

The rest of the Order meeting didn't amount to much. People were still shocked that Harry hadn't returned to Hogwarts for his Sixth year. They discussed a number of things about how to prepare for the war but nothing majorly important. In the end, everyone went home wondering where Harry and the rest were.

Morning came quickly and Harry felt much better. She and Tonks had discussed what had happened until late in the night and when they finally went to sleep, Harry had accepted that her Patronus had changed irreversible. Prongs would be missed but never forgotten and that was what important.

Today she would start working on her battle style. Tonks warned them all that it would take time to become comfortable with using the style you've chosen so it was best to start as quickly as possible. Harry chose to mix her style with Transfiguration, Charm, DADA and Battle Magic. The first three were fairly straightforward but could be deadly if used right. Battle Magic, as its name indicated, was Magic used for battle. It was a field that was no longer taught at Hogwarts these days but until two centuries ago, it was. Mainly because those days were filled with wars against the Goblins who had very powerful magic as well.

Battle Magic was different from other magic in the fact that it was much more powerful and destructive. Harry and Tonks had found several books in the Black Library about Battle Magic and were eager to start learning. Unfortunately, Battle Magic wasn't suited for

everybody as you needed to be rather strong to be able to use it. That's why those who could use Battle Magic were called Mages instead of Wizard or Witch. To be a Mage meant to be respected, revered and feared at the same time. Mages stood at the front lines in battle, dealing with the most powerful enemies, while others supported them by dealing with the small fry.

Harry felt confident however that she and her friends would at least be able to learn some of the Battle Magic spells. Even if they only succeeded at using the lower level Battle Magic, it would still be vastly more powerful than the magic Aurors or anyone else in the Wizarding World used. Some Death Eaters, such as Bellatrix Lestrange, were also able to use Battle Magic to some degree. She was one of the few however, as far as they knew.

After doing their regular workout, the four of them went to the garden and sat down, each a book in hand. Hermione had started reading on Healing Magic, Susan had a rare Potion book, Tonks a valuable DADA book and Harry was looking through a book on Transfiguration. At Hogwarts, Transfiguration had always been one of her best subjects so she chose to start with that.

The book she was holding was nothing too advanced but rather started at learning to transfigure raw material, such as stone for example, into the shape or form you wanted. It was true however that they had learned the basic of this years ago, like transfiguring a toothpick into a needle, but here it was explained in a way so that the transfigured raw material could be used in battle. Which was exactly what Harry wanted in the first place.

The book explained that in order to use transfiguration in battle, you needed to be very proficient at transfiguring at high speed. That was where the problem lay for many. Transfiguration was not a magic that could be done without high levels of concentration. That was proven when they were given almost an entire class period simply to transfigure a piece of material into a cup. Such delay of time would only get you killed in a fight. So it was recommended to first try to improve the needed time to transfigure something small and easy. Once you achieved that, you could move on to the next level, which was animating whatever you transfigured.

Not what she expected but Harry decided to do what the book said for once. While time was precious and they had none to waste, it

would be foolish to try and force things. That was something she had learned ever since the start of that summer. Looking at the others, she decided to move to the other side so she wouldn't disturb their reading.

The author of the book advised to start transfiguring things into simple shapes and everyday things. This was because people had a good visual image of those items and had no trouble imagining the shapes. Harry thought for a few seconds, thinking about what kind of shapes and forms came easily to her. She quickly found a few things and started practicing. Taking a small rock from the garden, she placed it in front of her and started imagining a fork in her mind. This wasn't more difficult than changing a toothpick into a needle but just like the book said, she started at the beginning.

For the next two hours Harry continued changing the shape of her rock. From a fork to a spoon, to a knife and so on. It seemed stupid and way too easy for a sixth year student to focus on that but the goal here was to improve on the speed it took to transfigure things. Complexity would come later once speed was satisfactory.

Tonks closed her book and stretched her back and legs. They had been reading and studying for over two hours now and she thought it was high time for a break. She had noticed that Harry had wandered off to the other side of the garden and she became curious to see what she was doing. Calmly making her way over to Harry she smiled as she noticed how her girlfriend had the cutest look of concentration on her face. Harry's eyes were focused on the rock in front of her, while the tip of her tongue was sticking out at the side of her mouth. Tonks stifled a giggle and sat down behind Harry, putting her arms around her and pulled her in a hug. Harry was surprised for a split second but relaxed when she realized who it was.

"Hi there." Tonks said softly.

"Hi yourself." Harry said leaning in her hug. "Done reading?"

"No but I needed a break." Tonks smiled. "What are you doing?"

"I'm practicing how to improve the speed of Transfiguration." Harry explained. "I need to be able to Transfigure at high speed in order to use it in battle, which is easier said than done."



"Because you need to fully visualize the shape and properties of what you trying to Transfigure." Tonks nodded in understanding.

"Exactly. So the book advised to start out with small things of everyday use." Harry continued. "Things we are very familiar with, to practice speed. Once we reach an acceptable level we can move on to more complex forms."

"Makes sense." Tonks smiled. "But seeing as I came here for a break, let's stop talking."

"Oh, something else in mind then?" Harry said grinning.

"This." Tonks said before kissing Harry. "Lots of this."

"Get a room you two." Susan called out when she saw Harry and Tonks fooling around.

"Yeah, some people are trying to read here." Hermione said smiling.

"I guess we can spare a few hours." Tonks joked. "What do you say Harry? Want to go and make wild, passionate love to me?" She laughed at Harry's embarrassed face and kissed her softly. "Yeah, you're right let's do that later tonight."

"Oh thank you for putting that image in my head." Susan snorted. "I don't need to know what you and Harry do and when you do it."

"Are you sure?" Tonks laughed. "You could probably learn a lot."

"Stop trying to corrupt them." Harry smiled at Tonks.

"But it's so much fun." Tonks whined. "I bet Hermione there is the kinky one. The silent bookish types always are."

"NYMPHADORA TONKS, I can't believe you said that." Hermione yelled shocked.

"Don't call me that." Tonks glared at Hermione. "Besides, there's nothing wrong with being a little kinky. Nothing to be embarrassed about, I assure you."

"I'm so not listening to this." Hermione said turning back to her book. "Unbelievable."

Tonks just winked at Harry who smiled. Sometimes it was just great fun riling up Hermione. Harry just shook her head at Tonks' antics and stood up. She had been sitting down for a few hours already and she needed to move around a bit. She noticed the wooden swords and figured she would get a little practice in. Tonks followed her gaze and smiled wickedly at Harry.

"You're going down." Tonks said challenging Harry.

"Bring it on." Harry accepted instantly.

The two of them got in a stance and slowly circled each other, waiting for the other to move. It was a dance they had done many times before. Harry made the first move but Tonks blocked the blow effortlessly. She retaliated with a swipe to Harry's right side but Harry dodged it without even breaking a sweat. Bringing her sword down, Tonks had to hurry and just barely stopped the sword from hitting her. She grinned before she pushed Harry backwards and once more they stood in front of each other, waiting for the next move.

Meanwhile at Hogwarts Ron was having the worst day ever. Only two classes had past and he got one detention already courtesy of McGonagall. She hadn't been pleased when she saw the essay he turned in. All it took was one glance at what he had written and she knew that he had just filled the parchment with nonsense. So she punished him with a week detention so he could redo that essay and several others. Luckily Prof. Flitwick had been more understanding and had agreed that he could redo the essay by next week.

Classes weren't much fun either as he missed having Harry around to talk to or Hermione to ask questions to. Without his two friends Ron was feeling very lonely and left out. Neville had seen how depressed Ron seemed and had started talking to him. Ron was grateful for the company and while Neville was somewhat of a loner himself, he was quite alright in Ron's book. Neville had proven himself last year and if Ron was honest, Neville did better than he did.

At lunch Ron got asked several more questions about Harry and Hermione that he couldn't answer. Neville helped him out by sitting next to him while Seamus and Dean sat across of him. Ginny sat further down the table but Ron could tell she was upset too. No surprise of course, as he and Ginny had hoped to get closer to Harry and Hermione this year. Things had not turned out the way they had hoped. If only they could reach their friends, then at least they would know something.

That evening, after all the training was done, Harry and the others were sitting in the living room. The afternoon had been great fun as they had practiced the things they had learned. On top of all the other training they did, Harry especially liked working on his Transfiguration and Battle Magic training. It was still only the beginning but they were sure things would go well once they managed to grasp the basics.

"Guys, I just thought of something." Tonks said.

"Guys? Where do you see a guy?" Susan asked jokingly.

"Fine. Girls, I just had an idea." Tonks said sticking her tongue out at Susan.

"Well, let's hear it then." Hermione smiled.

"We all know we can't do this alone right?" Tonks said seeing everyone nod. "And we don't exactly trust Dumbledore and the Order either. So we need to get our own group together."

"Yes." Harry nodded in agreement. "But that's easier said than done. We need people that we know are trustworthy and able to help us out."

"True but we don't need everyone to be aware of what we're doing." Tonks grinned. "If we have people who are willing to fight whenever an attack occurs instead of fleeing then that would be a large help already. If we have people that can hold off the enemy until reinforcements arrive, that would be a great help, don't you think?"

"I guess but where are we going to find such people?" Hermione asked.

"We already know." Tonks smiled. "Dumbledore's Army."

"The DA?" Harry said surprised. "But those are students, not fighters. Besides we only created that group to practice for our OWL's not to fight in the war."

"I know but I'm sure there are a few that would like to learn how to fight." Tonks nodded explaining. "If they learn how to fight, then they could defend others in case of an attack. They might not win but at least they can stall for time until help comes."

"But how are we going to do that?" Susan said. "Don't get me wrong, I think it's a brilliant idea but I don't see how we could manage that. It's not like we can just go to Hogwarts to spend a few hours and help them train."

"That's true but you're forgetting a few people." Tonks said. "One is a member of the 'Golden Trio' while others have fought Death-Eaters in the Ministry."

"Are you saying that Ron, Neville, Ginny and Luna should start up the DA again and teach them how to fight?" Harry said questionably. "I'm not saying that they couldn't but do they want to?"

"I don't think that's going to be a problem. Now that Voldemort's return is known many of them are scared." Tonks said. "I'm sure that some of them will want to learn some useful magic to defend themselves instead of being sitting ducks."

"I think Tonks has the right idea." Susan said. "It would be good for them to learn to defend themselves. Besides, we all know we can't do this alone. The four of us need help, we can't be everywhere."

"And Hogwarts has always been Voldemort's target." Harry nodded. "There's no way he won't attack Hogwarts. Maybe not when Dumbledore is still alive but he might get lucky and manage to kill him. Then nothing would stop him from attacking the castle."

"I don't think the Headmaster will be so easily caught off guard but I get what you're trying to say." Hermione interjected. "Dumbledore won't be around forever. The man is already in his hundred twenties; that's pretty old even for a wizard."

"So we agree?" Tonks wanted to know. "We need to find a way to start the DA again."

"Any idea's how?" Susan said when she came up with nothing. "It's not like we can walk up to the castle and call the DA together with no one finding out."

"We don't need to." Harry said. "We have agents present. Ron and the rest could restart the DA but instead of the purpose being passing OWL's, they would learn how to defend themselves and others from attacks. We know we can trust them. They helped out at the Ministry at the risk of their own lives just to help me. They did pretty well in the original DA and I'm sure they could lead the group if they wanted."

"Hmm, I don't know Harry." Hermione said hesitantly. "I agree that they might be capable of leading the DA but when it comes to deciding what to learn and to actually learn it, that's a whole other thing."

"Maybe but we could help them by sending them tips or spells to learn." Tonks said thinking. "That way we're sure that what they learn is useful and we'd have an idea of what they're capable of. That on top of their DADA lessons should provide them with a basic level of fighting skills. Not enough to fight on the frontlines but enough to make sure they can hold on until help arrives."

"Can't hurt to give them a chance." Susan agreed. "Who knows? They might surprise us."

"Alright, I guess you're right." Hermione said agreeing. "But we tell them to take this seriously. If we take the time to do research for them and giving them help, it had better be worth it. Last year the DA was about passing OWL's, now it's about getting to live. They should be aware of that."

"Of course 'Mione." Harry smiled. "Those who don't feel up to it, can leave as long as they take a vow not to disclose any information about the club."

"Better to have them take the oath altogether." Tonks mused. "Last time you guys got betrayed by one of your own. Disastrous as that was, now it would be even worse."

"Indeed. So we ask them to take an oath not to talk about the club and its members to anyone not privy to the secret already." Harry said agreeing.

"I think that's the safest way." Tonks said. "Those who refuse don't join. Simple and to the point."

"Very well. Now all we need is a way to contact Ron and the rest." Hermione said. "A letter will never work, there's way too much information to explain in a letter."

"I might have an idea but I need to check something first." Harry said. "I'll look into it."

The next morning the Daily Prophet reported how Harry had not returned for his Sixth school year at Hogwarts. Skeeter, the author of the article was once more pulling out random facts and rumors about Harry to fill the article. She went on that Harry had most likely fled from England and had abandoned them to their fate. Halfway through the article she changed her mind and predicted that he had been hidden for safety, while preparing for the fight with You-Know-Who. The rest of the article didn't have anything else but pure speculation. At the end of the article she wrote a message directed to Harry, begging him not to leave them alone against the Dark Lord.

"What a load of nonsense." Susan said. "I wonder how she gets published. Don't they realize just how much nonsense she sprouts with every article?"

"It doesn't matter." Hermione said. "They know the newspaper sells incredible well when she writes an article about a celebrity. Skeeter has the gift of making the most stupid facts into a full blown article. She doesn't care about what she says, only that people read her article, no matter how untrue the contents is."

"Well, I for one am glad that she didn't write anything like 'Harry Potter and best friend, Hermione Granger elope with love child' or something like that." Harry said putting the paper down. "She's capable of writing stuff like that."

"Yeah, I'd be pretty angry if she had written something like that." Hermione said while Tonks nodded pulling Harry to her, protectively. "Oh Tonks, don't worry, I'm not stealing her from you."

"You better not." Tonks said sticking her tongue out at Hermione. "She's mine and I'm not sharing."

"I'm right here, you know." Harry said to them.

"Yes we know dear." Tonks said before she laughed at seeing Harry pout.

Harry and the rest spend the day working on their projects and exercising. By now Susan and Hermione were used to the heavy training Tonks and Harry did so they had less trouble keeping up. As a matter of fact, both started to enjoy the training as they saw the difference already. Both noticed how they had gained a few muscles where it counted and both felt very good about it. Hermione and Susan no longer felt bad about running around in the bathing suit next to Tonks and Harry.

When the physical training was over, they focused on Occlumency. The two new girls had grasped the concept of meditating fairly quickly and could now learn to protect their mind. They would still have to learn how but the hardest part was over according to Harry. Emptying your mind is not as easy as it sounded; something Hermione had a lot of trouble with, in the beginning. But then again she wouldn't be Hermione, if she didn't learn this quickly as well.

Remus Lupin entered the Ministry of Magic as he had an appointment with Amelia Bones. He was escorted by two Aurors, after both checking his arms and giving up his wand, to the Minister's office. He had contacted Amelia the day before to discuss what they could do for the Werewolf communities in Britain. Amelia was no fool and she knew just how bad the people inflicted with that terrible curse were treated. She agreed that they should be checked and kept in quarantine during the night of the full moon but she saw no gain in totally shunning them from society. It was a vision some others in the Ministry shared but until now none of them had been powerful enough to do anything about it.

"Hello Remus, please come in." Amelia greeted him with a smile. "That will be all." She dismissed her guards.

"Thank you Minister." Remus said respectfully.

"Please Remus, its Amelia." She told him. "We've know each other long enough and we fought side by side before so I think that give us some sense of friendship, don't you think?"

"Okay, thank you Amelia." Remus said. "You don't know what it means to me that you agreed to meet me on this subject."

"Think nothing of it." Amelia quickly said. "This is something that should have been done years ago. I always argued that the Wizarding World needs to change their views on things like Lycanthropy and those inflicted with it. Unfortunately, until now those like us have had their opinions and ideas cut down by the more conservative voices in this Ministry."

"And now?" Remus asked hopefully.

"Some of the biggest bigots have been arrested for various crimes, Remus." Amelia smiled. "I hope you keep this between us but the Ministry was filled with criminals and traitors. We've been systematically disposing of them, one department at a time. Sometimes I wonder how we ruled our World at all. But enough about that, we have much to discuss so let's get to it. You told me you have some ideas?"

"Yes, as you know I'm a member of the Order of the Phoenix." Remus explained. "I know you're not a fan of us but we're really trying to help."

"Don't worry about that." Amelia reassured him. "The situation is bad enough so we need all the help we can get. Please go on."

"Thank you, in order to prevent some of the werewolves tribes to side with Voldemort, I talked to them and tried to convince them to stay neutral at the very least." Remus continued. "Most of the tribes have no interest in the war as they feel that they are not part of the Wizarding World. However, some of the tribes have been getting offers from You-Know-Who and are thinking of joining them. While the tribes are small, I'm sure you agree that we must prevent You-Know-Who from building up his army."



"Of course." Amelia nodded. "But do you think that the werewolves that are staying neutral will join us if we make things better for them?"

"No, they won't." Remus said immediately. "They won't simply fight with us just because of a few changes but I'm hoping to show the other tribes that they have other options that simply joining You-Know-Who."

"What do you propose?" Amelia nodded.

"While I would love to see some of those laws against werewolves revoked, I know that this takes time." Remus answered. "Time we don't have right now but there's much we can do. Most Werewolves can't find a job or home and they live on the street and survive by stealing and crime. If somehow we could improve on these situations it would be a tremendous step forward."

"I'm sure there's something we can do." Amelia smiled. "Like I said, I'm willing to do my best for them. But I have a few rules that I want followed. First of all, those that wish to join us and start over will take an Oath not to join Voldemort at any time. They will not be asked to fight for us either. They can if they want but no one will be obligated to do so."

"I'm sure they will agree to that." Remus nodded.

"Secondly, on the day of the full moon, they will voluntarily present themselves at a facility where they can transform without endangering the population." Amelia continued. "Those who fail to show up will be dropped from the program immediately."

"That's reasonable." Remus said. "Most werewolves have no desire to inflict others with this curse so I'm sure that they will agree to that as well. As long as they are treated right and with the decency they deserve."

"I guarantee that they will be treated with care and respect." Amelia assured him. "I will not allow blatant bigotry in this Ministry any longer."

"Thank you Amelia." Remus said with teary eyes. "Thank you so much."

Amelia stood up and walked around her desk and grabbed the poor man in a hug. For too long innocent people like him had suffered because some fools thought they were better than others and she vowed that it would end now. She held onto Remus until he stopped shaking and took out some of the best Fire-Whiskey she had and poured them both a shot. Remus smiled and raised his glass in the air.

"To a better world." He said which Amelia repeated and brought her glass to his before gulping it down.

"Nothing like a good drink, eh Remus." Amelia smiled.

"Quite right." He nodded with a big smile on his face.

They didn't realize it at that moment but this program would become one of the biggest achievements of the new Ministry of Magic. It would become an example for the rest of the world and would be the start of many changes and improvements of the British Wizarding World. Dozens of years from now, people inflicted with Lycanthropy would be seen as normal people with an incurable disease just like Muggle cancer or aids. No longer would they be discriminated against and shunned from society. Yes, it took many years for that to happen but it did and that was the most important thing. Amelia and Remus would become the faces of the battle against Lycanthropy and would go down in history as one of the Wizarding World's greatest Witch and Wizard of Modern Times.

## Chapter Sixteen: Secrets Revealed

It had been two weeks since the start of what would have been Harry's Sixth year at Hogwarts and things had gone quickly. Harry had been trying to come up with a way to inform Ron and the rest about what they were planning to do. It involved recording a message with the Pensive where they could use a projection to the others. Harry knew she had read about this somewhere but she couldn't remember where and it took some time to find the correct way to record their message.

It had taken almost an hour to explain everything from the moment that Harry and Tonks disappeared until now. Even then they had to gloss over some facts and history of Harry and Tonks' relationship before they came a couple. If they inserted that as well, it would have taken over double that time. Now the problem was how to get the Pensive to Hogwarts without anyone noticing. Dobby could easily do that but first they needed to warn Ron and the others that he was coming. They simple wrote a short letter with the message to be at the Room of Requirement that weekend and to come alone and not alert anyone.

"Are you sure about this?" Tonks asked. "This means they'll know about what happened."

"Sure? No, not really but we don't have a choice." Harry sighed. "I'm not jumping to show Ron and the rest what happened but we need to move on. If they have a problem with it, then so be it."

"I'm sure they'll understand." Tonks smiled softly. "They're your friends, right?"

"Yeah, let's just hope they'll still be my friends after this." Harry sighed.

"Hey, no getting all gloomy and dark on me." Tonks nudged Harry. "Everything will work out, you'll see."

Harry nodded and leaned closer to kiss Tonks. The kiss was a simple peck but it conveyed all the emotions Harry wanted to show her girlfriend. Tonks smiled and grabbed Harry before she started tickling her. Harry's joyful laughter alerted the others what was going on and soon Susan and Hermione joined in the fun.

"Hey no fair." Harry protested between laughter. "Three on one is too much."

The three other witches glanced at each other before they attacked Harry again. The adults who had come to see what all the ruckus was about smiled when they saw Harry enjoy herself without the stress and constant worrying, she normally did. It had gotten a lot better over the past few weeks but sometimes she crawled back into her shell. Tonks would have none of that and would quickly deal with it when it happened.

"It's good to see them like this." Emma said to Andromeda. "Harry's doing better and better."

"Yeah until her periods come." Andromeda smiled. "She's still not used to that part of being a woman. Not that I blame her of course."

"I remember my first periods vividly." Emma nodded. "First time I thought I was going to die from bleeding out. My mother had to slap me to get me to calm down so she could explain what was happening to me."

"The Muggle world is much more advanced in that area." Andromeda said. "In the Wizarding World things like sex are still taboo. We're very conservative about it I guess. Two witches together are not exactly socially accepted. People still think they're unnatural and frown upon it."

"Will they get harassed?" Emma asked worried. "Before it became somewhat accepted, a lot of gay people in the Muggle World were shunned from society and they suffered a lot of stigma. It's only recently that being gay has become somewhat socially accepted. Even now there's still a lot of prejudice against gay people. Of course, men seem to like the thought of two pretty women together but two men being a couple is a completely different matter, even now."

"Some people will have their say about it no doubt." Andromeda explained. "But as long as they keep their affections to a minimum in public, there won't be any problem. I'm not saying that they should hide their relationship but they should try not to flaunt it too much."

"Doesn't help that Harry was a boy before and is famous." Emma said sadly.

"No, it doesn't." Andromeda agreed. "That's why I believe that they should keep their relationship hidden to most of the Wizarding World. Like I said, we're very conservative about these kinds of things. I do not agree with this but I can't expect society to change in one night."

"So why are you okay with them if you were raised that way?" Emma wanted to know.

"Take a look at my daughter." Andromeda said with a broad smile on her face. "I'm sure you can see the happiness on her face just like I can. She didn't always smile and laugh like this. Before she met Harry, she was very lonely because of her Metamorphmagus powers. I'm sure she told you how boys used to ask her to change into somebody else or to change parts of her body."

"She told us a bit about that yes." Emma nodded.

"Let me tell that until Harry came into the picture, she truly believed that she would never find love." Andromeda said. "She honestly believed that no man would ever accept her the way she was. That every man would eventually ask her to change her appearance to fulfil his fantasies. It broke my heart every time she came home from Hogwarts and told me how yet another guy or girl had treated her like she was some kind of doll."

"Poor girl." Emma sighed. "Kids can be so cruel sometimes."

"Indeed. So imagine my surprise when she came home one night with the most brilliant smile I've ever seen on her face." Andromeda smiled at the memory. "Her eyes shone like diamonds in the moonlight when she told me how she had become friends with none other than Harry Potter. Over the next few months, that smile became a frequent expression. When she met up with her or got a letter, she just lit up the room. If not for everything else, I'm grateful to Harry for bringing that smile to my daughter's face."

"Harry does have a tremendous effect on people near to her, doesn't she?" Emma smiled at seeing her daughter have fun and laugh instead of reading a book.

"That she does." Andromeda agreed. "So, how could I be against something that brings my daughter such happiness? Was I surprised? Of course, never had I heard of such a transformation by magic before. But not once did I think that they weren't allowed to be together because of what society says. Frankly, if two people that love each other so much is wrong by society's standards, then society is wrong."

"I know what you mean." Emma smiled. "Who cares if they are the same gender or not; love that great can't be wrong. If we all loved each other like Harry and Tonks love each other, then the world would be a wonderful place indeed."

"Tonks is not the only one who's being influenced by Harry." Andromeda said. "Hermione as well has changed. I've only know her for a few weeks but from what I've heard she changed as well."

"Oh she changed alright." Emma laughed. "And for the better too. Ever since she was little, she was the smartest girl in her class. She's not one of those child prodigies but rather she loves to read and learn things. It's something both Dan and I encouraged from day one. Unfortunately, most of the other kids preferred to play and be kids, so they didn't understand Hermione's eagerness to learn. She wasn't exactly bullied in school but most of the kids ignored her and left her alone."

"Not ideal for a child's growth." Andromeda said.

"I know and we tried to get Hermione to socialize with other kids many times." Emma sighed. "She tried her best but she always thought the other kids were childish and not interested to learn anything. Of course the kids were childish as they were children who loved to play outside and have fun. Hermione however loved nothing more than sitting in the sun with a book on her lap for hours on end."

"Did she have any friends while growing up?" Andromeda asked.

"A few. We enrolled her in some advanced classes for smarter kids." Emma nodded. "We even went to see a school for the gifted but while Dan and I are well off, the tuition for that school alone would have taken most of our savings. It broke our hearts to disappoint our little girl like that but she was mature enough to understand that we

couldn't afford it. She eventually made some friends in the other classes and opened up a bit."

"That's good to hear." Andromeda said. "Must have been quite a shock to learn she was a witch."

"Goodness yes." Emma exclaimed. "We knew something was different about our Hermione but never would we have thought that Magic existed and a whole world of Wizards and Witches was hidden from our world. It was quite the eye-opener let me tell you. Luckily, Prof. McGonagall explained everything to us and she helped us tremendously. I don't know what we would have done without her help."

"Yes Minerva is quite adept at handling the introduction to the Wizarding World." Andromeda nodded. "I can't imagine how overwhelmed you must have been at the time."

"We needed some time to get used to our little girl being a witch." Emma explained. "As you might know, Witches do not have a very good reputation in the Muggle World. Mostly they're portrayed as evil women who do horrible things. Also most religions see Witches as evil and have hunted and killed a large number of women in that name."

"Yes, I'm well aware of the Witches hunt in history." Andromeda said. "It's part of the reason why our Worlds are now separated. It's also why it's so important to keep Magic hidden from those who have no ties with our World. If the world would learn about us, the Witch hunts would begin all over again."

"I understand but at that time it was still a shock to hear Hermione was a Witch." Emma continued. "Prof. McGonagall told us that even today, some parents react violently when they hear their son or daughter is magical."

"Yes, it happens a lot actually. Especially when religion is involved." Andromeda said. "It's one of the things that perplex the Wizarding World. Renouncing your children or disowning them is not something that happens a lot in our world. Neither is child abuse for that matter. Again, I'm not saying it doesn't happen but it's rare. Children are precious to us because they represent the continuation of our family name. Also, you might not know this but the number of

children in magical families is rather low compared to Muggle families."

"Hermione said something about that." Emma remembered. "Most families have only one or two children at most."

"Indeed." Andromeda said. "There's a reason for that. Having more than one child might mean that your family's future is secured but it also means that the family fortune and monies will need to be divided amongst the children. If you only have one child, the family fortune stays whole. This is one of those conservative ideas. Until a few centuries ago, families had a large number of children but several clans were destroyed when the children started to fight amongst themselves."

"You mean like killing each other?" Emma asked shocked.

"Sometimes yes." Andromeda nodded. "A few prominent families destroyed themselves by having to distribute their holdings and fortune amongst their children. As most of the time, the eldest son became heir of the family it wasn't uncommon to have brothers kill each other to become the eldest son. After a while people started to have less children to prevent these kind of things."

"But what about the Weasley family?" Emma asked. "They have what? Seven children?"

"An exception to the rule, I assure you." Andromeda explained. "I don't know any other family with so many children."

"I wonder how they managed to raise all of them." Emma questioned. "I mean, Molly is staying at home while Arthur is working at the Ministry of Magic. I can't imagine there's a financial aid to unemployed people in the Wizarding World?"

"No there isn't." Andromeda laughed. "That's why the family fortune is so important. While most ordinary Witches and Wizards have jobs, they also have the fortune of their family to fall back on. That fortune gives them enough security to live in relative comfort. Some of those families fortune is so great that they don't have to work at all. Families like the Malfoy's; the Nott's and the Zambini's for example have amassed great fortune over the years and are amongst the richest people in the British Wizarding World."



"So how did they get so rich?" Emma wondered. "Surely they must have done something to get all that money."

"Of course, but it goes back centuries for some families." Andromeda said. "Let's take the Malfoy's as an example. Compared to some other families they're quite new. I mean that the Malfoy name goes back only a few generations. But they were a crafty bunch and got rich by marrying into some of the older families. Once they done that, they used the fortune of those families to buy property and land. At that time land was very valuable and people needed it build their house on or use it as farming lands."

"That sounds a bit like the Muggle Middle Ages." Emma commented.

"Indeed. Many landowners at that time were magical." Andromeda explained. "At that time there was no Statue of Secrecy yet and magical people and Muggles lived together so to speak. That's not to say that they were aware of Magic. It was hidden from them as well but we didn't live separated. So those landowners got rich from exploiting the people working for them. The Malfoy's didn't just deal in land but were also notorious for dealing in every sort of item you might need. They were just better at hiding it than other and exploiting their resources to gain more power. Of course, they didn't hesitate to use magic to advance their standing and wealth."

"So they were evil even then?" Emma asked.

"I wouldn't call them evil as back then it was common practice but yes, they were pretty dark even then." Andromeda said. "Over the years, the Malfoy's gathered more and more land and power until the Statue of Secrecy forced them to hide from the Muggles. No longer having the means to work their lands, they started building shops and workplaces for Witches and Wizards. They kept the lands but allowed others to live on it. They received payment for use of the lands from Witches and Wizards instead of Muggles."

"Smart move." Emma said.

"It was and many followed their lead." Andromeda nodded. "Soon the Malfoy's and other prominent families were major landowners in the Wizarding World. They've lost a lot of power since then but they

still remain some of the richest families to this day. Thanks to their ancestors those families can afford to live the way they do today."

"Surely their money must run out sooner or later?" Emma said.

"If they didn't get money for their current properties, then yes." Andromeda agreed. "But even now the Malfoy's and others own a lot of property. Some of the stores in Diagon Alley and Knockturn Alley belong to those families and they receive a lot of gold from the store owners. Others have their own store or shop where they employ others to work in and get most of the money. Some families even have monopolies on everyday items that give them royalties each year. Also taxes are low compared to the Muggle World, so they can save a lot of money like that. "

"So most of the Wizarding World is in hands of a few families?" Emma concluded.

"You could say that, yes." Andromeda nodded. "But isn't that the same in the Muggle World? Don't some companies have all the rights to products everyone uses and get paid for this?"

"Yes, there are some companies like that." Emma admitted. "Some of them more obvious than others."

"It's the same for us." Andromeda said. "Sadly not many people realize this and are taken advantage of. It's one of the reasons Ted and I live mostly in the Muggle World. It was a shock at first but I've grown to love the Muggle World. Both worlds have their strong and weak points and they could learn a lot from each other."

"Isn't that the truth?" Emma sighed before she turned back to see Harry being tickled until she begged for mercy.

Ron Weasley was a lot of things. He was the youngest male child out of six boys and one girl; he was fascinated with Quidditch; was brilliant in playing chess; hated homework and studying; he had a bit of the 'foot in mouth' disease which had led him into trouble more than once; he even acknowledged that he was somewhat jealous of his friend and that he could be more than a little lazy.

But right now, most of all, he was lonely. Never before had he felt so lonely and alone while being surrounded by people. He was at

Hogwarts, one of the hundreds of students and had people he called friends with him and yet it didn't help. He knew it wouldn't be the same without Harry and Hermione around but never had he expected to miss them that much. It wasn't that Neville and the rest weren't friends but it wasn't the same. Harry and Hermione had been his friends since first year; they were always together except for a few moments where they had a falling out. Most of those times were also his fault, he realized.

He had always been a bit jealous of how Harry was always in the spotlight before now. He knew better now as he was constantly harassed by other students and even a few teachers about Harry's and Hermione's whereabouts. Now he knew how annoying it was to be constantly stared at and having people whisper about you behind your back. It wasn't fun at all. He had lost the count of the times he had to brush off another question about Harry. No, he knew better now than to be jealous of Harry.

He missed them because they had accepted him with all his faults. Even when he had been a total jerk, like the time with the Tri-wizard Tournament and the Yule Ball. He had treated both his friends very badly that year and yet they accepted him back once he apologized. That only showed how good Harry and Hermione were as friends. Classes were less fun without them at his side to talk to and occasionally copy homework off. He vowed that when he saw them again he would be the best friend they could ever wish for.

He was about to head down for breakfast when all of the sudden a letter appeared on his bed sheet. Looking around for anything that might explain the letter appearance but seeing nothing he took a closer look. On the letter, his name was written in handwriting that he would recognize from a mile away. He had copied enough homework from the owner so Hermione's elegant writing wasn't something he would forget in his entire life.

With shaking hands he took the letter and broke the wax seal that closed it. He unfolded the letter and read the few lines that were written in one breath. With a small smile he read it once more just to be sure he had read it right. He did.

Ron,

Get Neville, Luna and Ginny and be in the Room of Requirement in one hour. Tell no one else and do not draw attention to yourself.

This is very important.

Harry and Hermione.

Grinning like a lunatic he almost raced down to the Great Hall to get his sister and his friends. He did remember in time that he needed to act normally and so he took a few deep breaths and forced himself to calm down. Once he managed that he put the letter in his pocket and went down to the common room. As it was Saturday, most students were enjoying the last bit of good weather or were sleeping in. He couldn't find Ginny or Neville so he figured that they were already in the Great Hall or loitering around.

As fast as he could without being too obvious he entered the Great Hall. He immediately recognized the red hair of his sister and walked over to her. Ginny was sitting with a book on her lap enjoying her breakfast when she saw her brother approaching. She knew her brothers better than anyone so she immediately knew something was up.

"What's got you so excited?" Ginny asked curious.

"Not here." Ron shushed her. "Get Luna and meet me at Room of Requirement in half an hour."

"Huh? Ron, what's going on?" Ginny narrowed her eyes.

"Not here." Ron glared at her. "Just hurry up and be normal about it. It's important okay."

Ginny saw that Ron meant what he said and nodded her understanding. She closed her book and stood up from the table and casually walked out the Great Hall in search of Luna. Ron quickly filled his plate with some food and ate his breakfast. Luckily, most people had already finished breakfast and so not many students were left in the Great Hall. Ten minutes later Ron left to get Neville. If he knew the boy, he would either be at the green house or outside in the sun.

Ron found Neville sitting under a tree just enjoying doing nothing. He had no trouble getting Neville to follow him and together they made their way up to the seventh floor without being seen. When they got there Ginny and Luna were already waiting for them. Without explaining anything Ron started to pace past the statue three times while thinking about the room they had used for the DA the year before. Soon the four of them were inside and Ginny told him to spill the beans.

"Alright calm down, will you." Ron said grinning. "It's like this. I was about to leave for the Great Hall to get some breakfast when all of the sudden a letter appeared out of nowhere."

"What letter?" Neville interrupted.

"This letter." Ron said showing them the letter he received. "A letter from Harry and Hermione telling me to get you guys and be in this room within an hour."

"Give me that." Ginny demanded and she practically ripped the letter out of her brother's hands. "It doesn't say anything else." She said disappointed.

"Okay, so we're here but what now?" Neville said.

His words had hardly left his mouth when all of the sudden a pop could be heard behind them. They spun around, wands at the ready, but only saw something standing on the floor. Ron moved closer and noticed that it seemed to be something like a huge rock that was hollowed out. He had never seen anything like it however so he asked what it was.

"It's a Pensieve." Luna said in her usual tone of voice. "Daddy takes one with him when we go searching for the Crumple-Horned Snorkack."

"My grandmother has one as well." Neville admitted. "Bloody expensive and very rare thing to have. I've never used it but she told me that you can deposit memories inside it and then look at them later."

"All very interesting but it doesn't explain anything." Ginny said irritated. "How does this stupid thing work anyway?"

She tapped it with her wand and instantly the pensive activated. The four of them jumped back when suddenly a life size Hermione and Tonks appeared above the pensive. They stared at the images and Ron even tried to touch the image but his hand went straight through it.

"Hey guys, how are you doing?" The image of Hermione asked them. "Bet you're all surprised to see us like this?"

"Hermione, it's no use asking questions." The Tonks image said rolling her eyes. "You won't be able to hear their answers."

"It's called being polite Tonks, you should try it." Hermione glared at Tonks.

"Too tiring besides we got things to discuss." Tonks said turning to the four. "Before we go any further, we need you four to take an oath of silence. It's important that everything you'll hear here stays a secret. What you'll learn today will shock you and it will change everything. However most of this can have serious consequences if Voldemort or Dumbledore find out what's going on."

"You need to take an oath, on your magic that you will never discuss what you learn here with anyone without Harry's permission." Hermione nodded. "We know it's a huge thing to ask and we wouldn't insist on it if it wasn't necessary. If you don't want to take the oath, we'll understand but you'll have to leave the room. This projection will now stop until the oaths are taken and any unwilling person has left the room." And the image did indeed freeze.

"Blimey." Ron said breathing heavily. "An Oath of Silence on our magic. That's crazy."

"I Luna Lovegood, do hereby swear on my magic that I will keep everything that is discussed here and all of Harry Potter's secrets a secret unless given permission by Harry Potter. So mote it be." Luna calmly said as a flash of magic closed the Oath. "There, that wasn't so hard."

"LUNA, are you crazy?" Ginny yelled at her friend.

"I've been called Looney before so I would guess yes." Luna dreamily said. "It's not that big a deal. Just keep Harry's secret; that's something I can do without a problem."

"Luna is right." Neville nodded. "Like Hermione said, they wouldn't ask for an oath of that magnitude if it wasn't really necessary." And he took the same oath.

"I promised myself that I would be the best possible friend to Harry and Hermione when they returned." Ron said raising his wand. "If this is what it takes, then so be it." Ignoring the protests of his sister, Ron took the oath as well.

"Well, there's not a chance in hell that I'll get left behind again." Ginny muttered before taking the oath as well. Once all four of them had taken the oath, the image of Hermione and Tonks came back to life.

"Thank you for taking the oath." Both women said. "You have no idea how happy you made us by doing this. There is much to tell but unfortunately we don't have enough time. It's a long story and telling all of it would take hours if not days so we'll give you the shorter version."

"Early in the summer something happened to Harry." Tonks started. "You'll see in just a minute. What you'll see is going to be a shock for you but I assure you that it's one hundred percent real. Please remember that." The image of Tonks then turned to her right. "Come on, Harry it's your turn."

The four spectators' jaw dropped when a gorgeous young girl moved into view. She was wearing her long hair in a ponytail and had a normal wizard robe on. They looked at the lightning shaped scar on the girl's forehead and the tell tale green eyes that were so typical of Harry Potter.

"Hi guys." The girl said shyly. "Before you all freak out; yes, it's me Harry and yes I'm a girl now. Like Hermione and Tonks said, it's a long story so for now you'll have to be happy with the short version. So to summarize, at the beginning of summer I was in a very bad place. The death of S-Sirius hit me really hard and that combined with everything else that had happened made me really depressed and self-destructive."

"Harry was barely eating and sleeping." Tonks added. "She had nightmares again and her mind and body were shutting down. In short, she was killing herself from grief and depression."

"It seemed however that my magic didn't agree with me on that part." Harry smiled a bit. "In order to survive and heal me, it transformed me into the exact opposite of who I was. I know you guys are aware of how much I hate being the Boy-Who-Lived and everything that came with it. I hate every aspect of it and I truly wished I had never been born at that moment." Here seeing the image of Tonks giving the female Harry a kiss and hug had the four of them floored.

"I'm sure you now understand why Harry and Tonks disappeared." A new figure entered the conversation. They all knew the girl, Susan Bones from Hufflepuff. "They hid from the Wizarding World to allow Harry some time to adjust and get comfortable with her new body. But they did more than that because not only did they save me and my aunt, but also Hermione and her parents. You all know that Voldemort attacked my home but what you don't know is that Tonks came to get us only minutes before that. If it hadn't been for them, I would be dead right now or worse."

"I'm sorry we couldn't contact you before now." Harry said still in Tonks' arms. "It took a lot of time and effort to get this projection thing to work. These things don't come with a manual." She chuckled. "Now that you have a bit of a background we can talk about the more important things. Voldemort is back, we all knew that of course, but now it's official. While he hasn't done much so far, it will not stay that way. One day soon he'll start his war against the Wizarding World again and we'll need to be ready to face him."

"The four of us have been training and studying to fight Voldemort and his Death Eaters." Tonks said. "But we can't do it alone; we need help from people we trust and that will have our back in a fight."

"That's where you guys come in." Hermione smiled.

"The four of you have fought at my side last year." Harry said seriously. "I have never felt more proud of my friends as on that moment. Knowing that you willingly fought at my side gave me



strength and hope like nothing ever did before. I'm asking for your help once more. While Dumbledore and the Ministry are doing their best to fight Voldemort, we believe that it will be our generation that will do most of the fighting. But like Tonks said, we need help."

"We need you guys to start up the DA again." Susan continued. "The four of you were some of the best students in last year's group and there's no doubt in our minds that you'll do an excellent job in leading the DA."

"Except there's one major difference." Hermione said. "This time we'll learn to save lives instead of passing our OWL's. Instead of learning fifth year spells, you'll need to learn magic that will hurt people. You'll need to learn how to defend yourselves and others from Death Eaters and other enemies."

"Please do not take this lightly." Harry said just as seriously as Hermione. "This is not a game. People will get hurt and killed during this war; more than we can imagine. This is the real deal, no holding back."

"Don't worry too much though." Tonks smiled. "It's not like we're going to ask you to hunt down Death Eaters and kill them. Instead we want you four to prepare as many people for what is to come. Teach them how to defend themselves long enough for help to arrive or to get away. Also, we would like to ask you to keep an eye on Malfoy and his cohorts. As children of known Death Eaters they might know something."

"Don't confront them but listen to rumours and gossip." Susan said. "People talk and sometimes they let things slip by accident. Any and all information can be vital to fighting Voldemort."

"We'll provide you with a list of spells and magic that you'll need to learn." Hermione said. "Please learn them and practice them as much as possible. It might save your life one day."

"One last thing before we go." Harry quickly said. "Like you guys did, everyone that agrees to join the DA, or you can change the name if you want, must take an oath of silence as well. They need to be aware what we're trying to do so they can make the decision when they are fully aware of what's going on."

"No one joins without taking the oath." Tonks said once more. "If we were betrayed, it would be disastrous. There won't be detentions this time but possible death. So be careful who you ask to join as well. Also don't tell anyone about Harry's transformation; the longer we can keep this a secret the better."

"We'll keep in contact." Harry smiled. "If you're in trouble and need help, call for Dobby and we'll come. Only do this in an emergency however. If you receive a letter from us, read it and destroy it immediately so that you can't lose it for anyone else to find."

"Best of luck." Susan and Tonks said before they vanished.

"Ron, we're sorry for not letting you know earlier about what's been going on." Harry said. "Please don't think badly of me. You're one of my best friends and I would hate to lose your friendship because of this. Neville and Luna, the two of you have proven yourselves to be true friends last year. Thank you for everything you've done for me and I hope to see you again soon. Ginny, I'm sorry for not being able to be what you want. I hope we can still be friends and maybe even sisters one day. Good luck to you all." With this the image of Harry and Hermione disappeared from view and the pensive 'popped' away.

Ron's "BLIMEY" spoke for the four of them when they realized what they had just witnessed.

## Chapter Seventeen: Reactions

Ron, Ginny, Luna and Neville were still standing shock, minutes after the pensive vanished from the Room of Requirement. If they were Muggles, it could have been said that they looked like they've seen a ghost but as a Witches and Wizards, seeing ghosts was an everyday occurrence. Still, they felt like they were Muggles who had seen a ghost.

As Purebloods they knew a bit more about Magic than Muggle-borns or Half-Bloods. Not that they knew a lot more but at least they knew legends and stories about Magic. They knew that there were stories that would seem highly unlikely to others but that were widely accepted by older families and Purebloods. These stories told of magical feats that were never seen by any living Witches or Wizards, and even then some stories were just crazy.

But none of them had ever heard of Magic transforming your body into the complete opposite. Such a thing was unheard of and they had definitely never heard about how your own magic could do such a thing in order to protect yourself and ensure your existence.

"Someone please pinch me." Ron managed to say. Seconds later he yelped out in pain as Luna pinched his right butt cheek hard. "Ouch Luna, not that hard."

"Just making sure." Luna smiled back non worried.

"That's going to leave a mark." Ron grumbled. "At least now I'm sure this wasn't a dream. You guys saw the same thing, right?"

"You mean about how Harry is now a girl?" Neville snorted. "Yeah mate, we all saw it."

"Is such a thing even possible?" Ginny asked her brother still shocked.

"You're asking me?" Ron said to his sister. "How am I supposed to know?"

"Harry does make one stunningly beautiful girl." Luna said airily.

That one sentence seemed to shock Ginny even more than seeing the girl Harry standing in front of her. Tears started forming in her eyes and soon she sank down on her knees sobbing uncontrollably. The three others stared for a few seconds before Ron grabbed her in a brotherly hug not caring who saw it. He might not show it a lot but he adored his little sister and would do anything to protect her from harm. Like all siblings they argued and fought at times but they loved each other dearly. Ron knew just how hard this would be for Ginny to accept. He was well aware of the huge crush she had on his best friend so he wasn't surprised to her break down like this.

Ginny looked up in surprise when she felt someone hug her but she pressed herself in her brother's arms. This was the Ron she knew when they were little. The caring, protective brother, who took care of her and played with her when they were alone, because all their brothers were at Hogwarts. She had missed that part of Ron. When she came to Hogwarts, Ron had reached the age where caring for your little baby sister was considered as un-cool and so he had somewhat ignored her during her first year. That had hurt her and it was one of the reasons she was so tempted by the diary of Voldemort.

Now she cried as all her dreams came crashing down around her. Seeing Harry as a girl was bad enough but seeing Tonks hug and kiss him was a whole other thing. She realized now that her mother had been right about Tonks and Harry being together but for the life of her she couldn't understand how and when it had happened. She knew however that Tonks was a decent person who would never harm Harry or treat him badly. Still it was a major shock to her and it only made her cry more.

"It's okay, Gin." Ron said soothingly. "Let it out." Holding her until her sobbing finally lessened to a few sniffles and hiccups. "Feeling better?"

"Y-Yeah, a little bit. Thanks, Ron." Ginny said wiping her nose on her handkerchief.

"No worries, that's what brothers are for right?" Ron smiled at her. "Do you want to talk about it?"

"I'm sure you know Ron." Ginny sighed. "I don't need to explain how I feel about Harry do I?"

"Guess not." Ron nodded.

"Why did this have to happen?" Ginny asked nobody in particular. "This year was going to be the year Harry and I got closer, maybe even more than close. I was going to be the best friend he could ever have and try to make him see me as girl who fancied him and someone he could learn to love."

"I know, Gin." Ron said.

"No, you don't know." Ginny turned on him. "Everything is different now. Harry's a girl now and I'm pretty sure that I don't like girls that way. Even if I did, there's no way mum will allow her only daughter to be a Witches' Witch. You know how the Wizarding World feels about this."

"Not to mention Harry and Tonks looked very close." Neville mentioned making both Ron and Ginny glare at him. "Hey, I'm just saying."

"Yes Neville, we know." Ginny snapped. "I still can't believe mum was right about that."

"Harry did look very relaxed and happy when she held him." Luna said contributing to the conversation. "Haven't seen Harry so calm before. It's like she chased away all the stress and tension from him the second she embraced him."

"Sorry Gin, but Luna is right." Ron said looking at his sister. "I'd like to say I know Harry best of all, well perhaps outside of Hermione, and even I haven't seen him like that. He's usually tense and very close guarded when it comes to hugging and people touching him."

"Don't you think I saw that?" Ginny said angry. "I've liked Harry for years and I know a lot about how he acts and reacts. I saw immediately by his posture and his eyes that he liked being hugged by Tonks. Not to mention kissed."

"You know, we keep saying 'him' but shouldn't it be 'her' now?" Neville said with a small smile.

"Mate, you're really not helping here." Ron hissed at his friend and dorm mate.

"L-Let's just go." Ginny said sadly. "I need some time to think." She was about to leave the room when Neville called out.

"Ginny wait, are you going to help out with the DA?" he asked.

"Of course I will." Ginny said glaring at him. "Just because I can't be with Harry, doesn't mean he isn't my friend anymore. I'm not that shallow."

"I never said you were Ginny." Neville quickly said. "I just think its better we leave here with some kind of a plan. Who knows when we'll be able to talk about this after we leave."

"Neville is right." Ron admitted. "Let's just come up with some kind of plan and then we can leave and think about what've learned today. First thing first, who do we invite to join?"

"We need to be able to trust them." Luna opted. "So no one that might seem unreliable or ties with unreliable people."

"Good thinking Luna." Neville agreed. "Okay, let's see who we can eliminate. There are Mariette and Cho, those two shouldn't be asked again."

"Obviously." Ron gritted his teeth at the mention of those two.

"Outside of those two I can't really find anyone who shouldn't be asked to join." Neville mused. "It's not like everyone will join anyway."

"Okay, so when should we ask for the first meeting?" Ginny said wanting to finish this up early.

"How about at the end of next month?" Luna said. "Harry told us that they would send us spells to learn. It would be better to have somewhat learned them before we start teaching them to others. That way we can help and learn at the same time."

"Excellent idea." Ron said. "Though I'm not looking forward to all the extra work."

"There's no helping it Ron." Neville said. "Either we learn to fight or we get killed in the first battle."

"We didn't do so badly at the Ministry." Ron remarked.

"True but they weren't trying to kill us at that time." Neville explained. "I've thought about this a lot during the summer. If they wanted us dead instead of trying to get that prophecy, we wouldn't have lasted long."

"That's true I guess." Ginny admitted thinking the same thing. "We got lucky that night. Next time we might not be as lucky so we'd better be ready when they come at us."

"Okay, so next month we organize a meeting." Ron agreed. "For now, we keep quiet and pretend we haven't heard from Harry or Hermione since the end of last year."

The four of them nodded and exited the Room of Requirement. Each wandered off needing some time to think about everything that had happened. They would speak more about the DA later but now they needed to be left alone with their thoughts.

It had been two days since Harry had written the letter to Ron so they could give them some background information about what had happened to him and the others. She had been a nervous wreck for the past two days as she feared how her friends would react to her transformation. Thanks to Dobby, they knew all four of them had accepted taking the Oath of Silence so that was something at least. But she feared how they would feel about her now. They had sent a small package filled with parchment with the spells they needed to learn and teach the others that joined. The spells were pretty straight forward as they contained shield spells, blasting spells, cutting spells and the like. One thing they all had in common was that they were all light orientated spells that were widely known and accepted by the public. They had no intention on having them learn borderline dark spells as that would only cause trouble. Now however they had no news from them and Harry was stressing out as she didn't want to lose any of her friends. Tonks tried her best to cheer up but even her best efforts didn't help much. They didn't blame Harry however as they all knew just how much she valued the friendships she made in life.

They were all sitting in the living room when all of the sudden Dobby popped away like he had been called by someone. This alarmed them as the only ones who knew how to call for Dobby were Ron and others. They all tensed but relaxed once Dobby reappeared next to time. In his hand he was carrying what seemed to be two letters and he quickly gave them to Harry. She quickly looked at them and saw that one was from the four of them and the other was from Ginny. Opening the first she read it out loud so the other could hear it too.

Harry (and the others too),

No need to worry. We got your back, mate. We'll take care of things here in Hogwarts and keep everyone safe from harm. Just don't send us to many extra spells all at once, some of us have OWL's you know. Thanks for trusting us with your secret. That means a lot to all of us. Don't worry, you're still Harry Potter our friend and nothing will change that. Certainly not some magical transformation. It was quite a shock to all of us but now at least we understand why you all disappeared like that. We don't blame you mate, we would have done the same thing.

Keep us updated with how things are going on your side and we'll do the same from our side.

Ron, Ginny, Neville and Luna.

Though short it was more than enough to make Harry shed some tears. She blamed those female hormones for that but nobody was fooled by that. They all knew how scared she had been and now that she knew that she hadn't lost their friendship she was just so relieved that she could cry. Which she did. She handed the letter to the others and opened Ginny's letter but refrained from reading it out loud. She had a feeling this was a personal letter and for her eyes only. Unfolding it, she started reading.

Harry,

I know this probably isn't the best way to discuss this but we don't have any other way. I know that you are aware of my feelings for you. It's not exactly a secret is it? Please don't think badly of me but when I was a little girl, I grew up with the stories of the brave and



noble Boy-Who-Lived. They were my favorite stories and I loved it how they made the Boy-Who-Lived into a gallant hero who saved the princess from the evil witch or wizard. I guess the Muggle World has such stories as well but I'm not sure. Anyway, growing up all I wanted to be was the princess that got saved by her hero. Pretty silly I know but hey, I was young and didn't know any better.

When I saw you for the first time at King's Cross station I couldn't believe how normal you looked. You have to understand to us, magical children; you were portrayed as the most amazing wizard of all times. So when I saw this skinny boy with glasses instead, well I wanted to know why you were so different from the stories. I pestered Ron many times during that year to tell me about you but he always refused. I think he enjoyed not telling me something I wanted to know so badly.

Then second year happened and like in the stories a hero came to save me. I had dreamed about this moment for so long but when it happened it didn't seem all that magical anymore. I was terrified of what had happened and what I had done. I know it wasn't my fault but still I felt guilty about everything. When everything was over, I started hoping that maybe we could become friends and one day more than friends. I was still hanging on to that image of Harry Potter, the boy hero who saved the princess in all those stories.

Anyway, it took me months to get over my crush on you and with the help of Hermione, who reminded me that you could always use another friend; I tried to become a better friend to you. It worked somewhat as we talked more than before. It gave me hope that someday you might see me as more than Ron's little sister. I hoped that we could become even closer this year and perhaps even get together. I finally saw Harry Potter instead of the Boy-Who-Lived, and to be honest, I liked Harry Potter a lot more now that I knew how stupid those girl fantasies of mine were.

And now this happens. While I might be over my crush on you, it doesn't mean I like you any less. In fact, I like you more and more. I truly do, please believe that. It has nothing to do with you being the Boy-Who-Lived or the Chosen One as they call you now. I like Harry Potter, my brother's best friend, way more than I ever like the fairy tale Harry. Sadly, it seems my feelings will remain unanswered. I don't blame you, Harry, not one bit. I'm sure you didn't mean for any of this but the truth is that you just broke my heart. It will take some

time to heal and mend but I'm sure it will work out in the end. Maybe it's even for the best this way.

I would like for us to be friends; I always wanted that and it makes me both happy and sad that you consider me your friend. Please be patient with me as I'll need some time to accept what has happened. My feelings for you won't disappear just like that but I'm sure we'll make it work.

Your friend,

Ginny

"You okay, Harry?" Tonks asked when she heard Harry sigh loudly.

"I broke her heart, Tonks." Harry said sadly. "She didn't deserve that."

"Harry, it's not your fault." Tonks said hugging her. "Ginny doesn't blame you, you know that right?"

"Yeah but still...." Harry answered.

"No buts." Tonks said sternly. "Just like Ginny can't help her feelings, you can't help yours. It's the way things work in love. Sometimes you get lucky enough to meet that special person and have your feelings returned but sometimes you don't. It's not anyone's fault, it just happens."

"Guess we got lucky huh?" Harry smiled.

"You know it." Tonks grinned. "And who knows, you might get lucky anything tonight."

"Tonks, how many times do we have to tell you?" Hermione said. "We don't need to hear or know what you and Harry are up to at night."

"Sorry 'Mione." Harry blushed. "We're just joking around."

"Yeah right." Hermione snorted. "Like we'd believe that. "

"It's true you know." Susan laughed. "You two make it way too obvious to see what's going on. Hermione and I have learned to see the signs by now."

"Oh really? And what might those signs be?" Tonks challenged.

"That's easy." Hermione said smirking. "Whatever you touch Harry's sides, she shivers in response showing that she's aroused by your touch."

"Maybe I'm just ticklish?" Harry said embarrassed.

"Could be." Hermione admitted. "But if it was because you're ticklish then you wouldn't lick your lips like you do every time. Also, you throw back your hair showing your neck and the neck has always been one of the most erogenous zones of a woman."

"And pray tell us how you know such a thing, young lady?" Emma said joining the conversation.

"Euh, I read it in a magazine." Hermione stammered with a blush.

"Hah, busted." Tonks roared in laughter. "Was it a naughty magazine?"

"No Tonks, it was not a naughty magazine." Hermione rolled her eyes. "It was a Muggle magazine dedicated to women with fashion, news and gossip."

"You read gossip magazines?" Harry asked shocked.

"Am I not a woman?" Hermione said.

"Well yes but..." Harry started. "Don't get me wrong but I never thought you'd be interested in those kinds of magazines."

"Just because I like reading and learning, doesn't mean I don't enjoy a good gossip or fashion article." Hermione huffed. "Honestly Harry, I thought you knew me better than that."

"I'm sorry 'Mione." Harry apologized quickly.

"Oh Harry, she's just trying to guilt trip you into something." Emma laughed. "I'll bet you anything she was going to ask you for some books or something like that."

"Thank you mum, for ruining my setup." Hermione grumbled.

Everyone laughed at hearing that and the rest of the evening was spent in much better atmosphere. Now that Harry knew that her friends were not rejecting her or thought of her as freak, she was much more relaxed. Emma had introduced some Muggle board games and they had a great time explaining how to play to Susan. Monopoly was her definite favorite game and she was unbeatable in it much to the other's surprise.

Remus Lupin, werewolf, Marauder and member of the Order of the Phoenix was currently talking to another werewolf pack. He had been doing this for several months now and had managed to get several of the packs to stay neutral in the fight. He had been able to convince them that following Voldemort wouldn't accomplish anything. Many of the Werewolves knew all too well that the Dark Lord considered everyone but Purebloods beneath him and thought of them as disposable. Still they also didn't want to anger him by joining Dumbledore or the Ministry so they decided to keep neutral. That was acceptable for Dumbledore and the Ministry as they certainly didn't want to force the issue. Push too hard and they might decide against you anyway.

The pack he was now talking to was a different matter. It was a small pack with about ten to fifteen werewolves of different age and background. This was the third time he was meeting with them and he had a bad feeling about this group. They were very outspoken against the Ministry and Dumbledore as neither of them had done anything to help werewolves. As a matter of fact, the Ministry had a long history of persecution and discrimination against werewolves. Many of the Purebloods saw them as vile beasts that should be terminated or at least contained. This had led to various laws and regulations that made life for werewolves very hard and unpleasant. So it was no wonder many of them didn't see eye to eye with the Ministry of Magic.

"Please reconsider." Remus pleaded. "You-Know-Who will not make things better for us. He just wants to use us to reach his goals and then he'll dispose of us."

"So you say." The leader of the pack growled. "But unlike you, the Dark Lord has been very generous towards us. He's provided us with food, shelter and women. What have you given us? A weak promise that things will turn out fine with the new Minister. The way we see it, the Dark Lord has done more for us in the past few days than the Ministry and Dumbledore ever did."

"Don't you see he's trying to cloud your judgment?" Remus said. "He gives you what you want now but soon he'll just send you to battle to die."

"Do not presume us to be weak." The leader roared. "We will not die fighting some fancy wizard with a wand."

"You don't understand...." Remus tried once more.

"We understand all too well." Another werewolf yelled. "Easy for you to talk when you're personal friends with Dumbledore and several other rich families. But for those who have to live off scraps and are homeless nothing comes easy. You have no idea what it's like to be a true werewolf. You're a disgrace."

Remus took a step back as he realized things weren't going his way. While so far, no meetings had turned violent it was always a possibility. He saw several members of the pack tense and he knew he was in trouble. He raised his hands, trying to calm them down and turned to the leader.

"I understand, I will not bother you any longer." Remus said before taking a few steps back.

"Not so fast." The leader said. "I'm sure the Dark Lord will pay a handsome price if we delivered you to him. I'm sure you have plenty of information that he wants so you're not going anywhere."

"Don't do this." Remus pleaded. "I'm leaving and will not bother you or your pack again. Just let me leave."

"I don't think so." The leader chuckled. "Grab him."

Several of them ran towards Remus who had turned around and started running towards the exit. It was no use however as two of

them had already took place at the door. He took out his wand and stunned one of them but the other kicked the wand out of his hand. Before he could do anything he was slammed into the ground by another werewolf. Remus groaned in pain from having a grown man land on his back and hitting the ground face down. He felt the air being pushed out of his lungs and his head was spinning. Still, he realized he was in major trouble. If they manage to capture him, only torture and death at the hands of You-Know-Who awaited him.

Suddenly the weight on his back disappeared and he heard several people yell out in surprise and pain. He turned on his back and saw a House-Elf standing in front of him. He recognized the House-Elf immediately from the stories Harry used to tell him in third year. This was the Elf that was given freedom by tricking Lucius Malfoy.

"Bad wolfies." Dobby said snapping his fingers and all the werewolves were flung across the room. "Harry Potter's Wolfie needs to come with Dobby." And with that Dobby and Remus vanished from the room with a small 'pop'.

Remus gasped as he opened his eyes and saw that he was in a totally different place. He knew that this Elf had just saved him from a terrible fate but he didn't understand why or how it had happened. He looked around him and noticed that he was in a Muggle city, judging from the high buildings and sounds of the streets a bit further away. He picked up his wand and turned to the Elf and noticed that it had disappeared. He was starting to panic when he heard a small 'pop' behind him. Wand at the ready he jumped around and prepared for anything that might happen.

"Wow there Remus, calm down, will you?" Tonks said grinning.

"T-Tonks?" Remus asked. "What the hell is going on here? Where am I and how did that elf know I needed help?"

"All very good questions which will be answered in a few minutes." Tonks smiled at the man. "Here, read this and memorize it."

"My god, Kingsley was right." Remus gasped as he understood what she wanted him to do. "You and Harry really did manage to cast the Fidelius Charm."

"Of course we did." Tonks said a bit annoyed at being underestimated. "How else would we have stayed hidden for so long?"

"I'm sorry Tonks; I didn't mean anything by it." Remus said sensing her annoyance. "I'm just confused and still jumpy from what happened."

"It's fine; just don't do it again." Tonks said accepting the apology. "Now come on, Harry is waiting for you."

"Take me to him, please." Remus said immediately. "I've been worried sick about him. Really, what's gotten into the two of you to just disappear like that? You two better have one hell of an explanation for all of this."

"Oh we do, Remus." Tonks laughed loudly while motioning for him to follow to the elevator. "We do."

"Can't wait to hear it." Remus muttered.

"Oh, you'll see it even." Tonks laughed once more.

When the elevator reached the top floor Tonks and Remus quickly stepped out to the hallway and into the large living room of the top apartment. Remus whistled at the place; this was much more luxurious than he had ever seen. Frankly he was already awed at how Tonks and Harry had managed to 'steal' an entire apartment building like that. There had to be a great story behind this. He smiled sadly as he thought about how Sirius would have reacted to all of this. Surely, the man would think this was one hell of a prank.

He saw several other sitting in the living room and he followed Tonks. He saw Hermione and her parents; Ted and Andromeda Tonks were there as well; also Susan Bones and Amelia Bones were sitting on the right. They all greeted him and Hermione gave him a quick check up for injuries but didn't find anything. He was surprised at how she did magic outside of Hogwarts but figured they would explain everything to him later.

"Well, this is quite a surprise." Remus said nervously. "I'm not sure how to react here."

"Just relax Moony." A voice came from the stairs.

Remus turned around towards the voice and his eyes just about popped out of his head. Descending from the stairs was a girl he though long dead. A girl that had meant so much to him and his friends. A friend that had accepted him without worry for his infliction. A friend who gave him so much love and friendship that he owed her almost everything. Tears started forming in his eyes and he took a few steps forward to the girl.

'L-Lily? Y-you're alive?" Remus managed to say.

"I'm sorry Moony but I'm not my mother." The girl said sadly.

"Your mother?" Remus narrowed his eyes. "Lily had only one child and that's Harry. I don't know what's going on here but I won't allow you to dishonour my friend's memory like that." He went for his wand but found at least six wands aimed at him, the second he reached for it.

"Don't you dare." Tonks said angry actually making Remus step back gulping at the look she gave him.

"Let's all calm down shall we?" Amelia said being the voice of reason. "Remus, please lower your wand and we'll explain everything."

"It's okay Professor." Hermione said gently. "Everything will make sense in a few minutes. Just give us a chance to explain."

"Very well." Remus said lowering his wand. "Now please, start talking."

"Moony, you're right that Lily had only one child." Tonks said. "Her child is standing in front of you. Surely you can see that this isn't Lily but her child?"

Remus looked at the girl in front of him and took a good look. He gasped as he saw the lightning shaped scar on her forehead and the green eyes that were so typical of Lily and Harry. It was only Susan's quick thinking that allowed Remus to fall into a chair and not to the ground.



"H-Harry?" He asked shocked.

"Hi Moony." Harry smiled. "Surprise?"

"What happened to you? I mean, you're a ..." Remus stammered.

"A gorgeous, drop-dead sexy red-head?" Tonks said hugging Harry for comfort. She knew how hard this was on Harry even when she smiled.

"Euh, well I was going to say 'girl'." Remus blushed. "But your way works too, I guess."

"It's a long story, Moony." Harry smiled at the man. "Are you up for it?"

"I have a few hours to spend so yeah." Remus shrugged. And so he was informed of everything that had happened since the beginning of the summer. Remus listened in shock at what they had done and what they were planning to do. He was horrified at how Harry was doing at the Dursley's and he blamed himself for not paying more attention to how the child of his best friends was doing. He apologized for not being there for him but Harry said there was nothing to apologize for.

Remus' jaw dropped when he heard the plans they had to fight Voldemort and how Tonks and Harry had managed to save Amelia and Susan from being killed. He felt immensely proud of Harry for taking a stand against Voldemort and what they had accomplished so far. He felt slightly incompetent when he compared what the Order of the Phoenix had been doing next to what Harry and his group had done so far. Three hours later, Remus sank down in his chair, as he thought about everything.

"Now do you see why Harry and I left the Wizarding World?" Tonks asked him.

"Of course." Remus nodded. "It would only have caused trouble for Harry to let everyone know of this transformation. I can only imagine how people would have reacted to that. Just one question if I may." He turned to Harry.

"Sure Moony, ask away." Harry smiled in understanding.

"Are you sure that this is a permanent transformation?" He gently asked.

"We're pretty sure." Harry nodded. "All evidence of me being a boy before is gone. My entire DNA has been rewritten and my body is one hundred percent female. I even have periods." That last part was added quietly.

"That's amazing." Remus said. "I've never heard of anything like that before."

"So, do you think I'm a freak now?" Harry asked a bit scared.

"Harry, look at me." Remus said strongly. "I would never think such a thing of you. You're the child of two of my best friends; friends that accepted me, despite being a werewolf. I could never think bad of you like that. You are Harry Potter, child of James and Lily Potter, godson of Sirius Black, my nephew in all but blood, whether you're a boy or a girl makes no difference to me." He held out his arms and Harry slowly hugged the man and allowed him to hug her.

"Thanks Moony." Harry said with a smile. "That means a lot to me."

"Don't sweat it kiddo." Remus said. "Now what is this about you and Tonks being a couple. How long have you two managed to hide that?"

"We've been friends since the summer before third year but we've been together as couple since last Christmas." Harry blushed at having to explain that part.

"That long?" Remus said surprised. "Any nobody knew about it?"

"Not until we took all these drifters in." Tonks said pointing to Hermione and the rest. "We thought it best to keep it a secret for as long as possible."

"That's brilliant." Remus laughed. "Oh man, Sirius would have loved this. That's got to be the most elaborate prank ever." He noticed how Harry seemed to hang her head at the mention of Sirius so he decided to deal with that straight away. "Harry, don't blame yourself for what happened. Sirius wouldn't want that at all. As a matter of

fact, he told me that he could die happily if it meant protecting you and the others."

"But..." Harry started.

"No buts." Remus shook his head. "It's okay to mourn and miss him but don't blame yourself. Sirius was a grown man and made his decisions alone. He knew there was a chance that he might get hurt, killed or captured that night. Still he went because he knew he wouldn't be able to live with himself if something happened to you. Just like you went to his rescue without a doubt, he did the same."

"That's just it." Harry said. "He didn't need to be rescued in the first place. If only I had been more careful."

"Stop it Harry; 'If only' doesn't help at all." Remus said once more. "Trust me when I say that both Sirius and I would have done the same thing if we thought you were in danger. Sirius vowed to me that he wouldn't abandon you again when you needed his help, damn the consequences. He fell in battle, protecting his godson, like he vowed to do. Please don't dishonour his sacrifice by blaming yourself. Sirius knew that he probably wouldn't survive this war and he made his peace with it. So did I, this war will take many lives and I'm not confident I'll live to see the end of it."

Everyone gasped at Harry's reaction when Remus said that. The air started crackling with magic and they could see it twirling around Harry. Around her, a gentle wind started blowing and her hair started waving around. Her brilliant green eyes shone like never before, power visible in them. Harry clenched her fists tightly and glared at all of them.

"No, I will not allow anyone else to die." She said, magic rolling off her. "I will protect all of you with my life. Nobody here will die as long as I'm alive to protect you."

Once she finished speaking, Harry fell down to the floor. Tonks quickly grabbed her girlfriend and relaxed when she saw that Harry had fallen asleep. Excusing herself and Harry, she gently picked the smaller girl up and carried her to their bedroom. Everyone else was still shocked at what they had seen.

"Merlin, I knew Harry was powerful but this was out of this world." Amelia said when she regained her voice.

"What just happened?" Dan asked them.

"Dad, that was Harry's magic surrounding her." Hermione explained. "This isn't something you can just do. You need to have a ridiculous amount of magical power to be able to do this. Not many people are capable of doing so."

"Hermione is right." Remus said as the teacher in him came out. "Only a handful of people in the entire history of the Wizarding World have been able to call up their magic like this. The most known of them is Merlin himself."

"You mean to say that Harry is as powerful as Merlin?" Susan said shocked.

"No, of course not." Remus disagreed. "Merlin was powerful beyond belief and unfortunately we'll never truly know just how powerful he was. What I meant to say is that it's exceptionally rare for a young wizard, I mean witch, to be able to do something like this. Harry had always had a lot of power but he always held back; I noticed this when I heard the story about how he scared away over a hundred Dementors in his third year. I would never have guessed he was this powerful though."

"This is good right?" Emma asked. "I mean, she's going to need this power to defeat Voldemort."

"Yes Emma, this gives me much hope for the future." Amelia smiled. "However, we can't count on Harry all the time. We need to do our part and make sure she's ready and able to take down that madman when the time comes."

Everyone nodded in agreement and silently vowed to do everything in their power to help Harry. The rest of the evening, Remus and the rest told how things were going in the Wizarding world. None of them saw Tonks or Harry again that evening, which wasn't surprising as Hermione explained just how protective Tonks was of Harry. When he heard this, Remus felt pity for the one who hurt Harry in front of her; the poor bastard would regret pissing her off.

Then again, if he or she hurt Harry, then they deserved every bit of Tonks' wrath he decided.

## Chapter Eighteen: Of spying and no Magic

The next day Hermione called Harry and the rest together to discuss some of their plans. It was now about the end of September and they had to start moving if they wanted to be ready when Voldemort started his assault on the Wizarding World. While they had a lot of planning done already, Hermione knew that they needed to move faster in some areas. One of those areas was the few rituals they wanted to do. She had been against it at first because of the stigma that existed in the Wizarding World against rituals. In modern times rituals had fallen out of grace because of how Dark Wizards and Witches had used them to cause harm.

Voldemort was known to have performed more than one ritual to boost his already impressive power. He then used that gained power to almost destroy half of the Wizarding World in the process. People didn't like rituals just because of that though. Rituals were associated with more than one Dark Lord and throughout history examples of abuse were shown. Also the lack of understanding about the rituals made people fearful of them and that fear turned into hate. The leaders of the Wizarding World, who liked their people weak and scared so that they were easier to control, reinforced that belief by claiming that every ritual was Dark and dangerous Magic. People who had been taught from young age that rituals were something to be feared, kept those beliefs even after reaching adulthood and so after several generations, people who dared use rituals were seen as Dark and promptly executed.

That didn't mean that all rituals were dark however. Just like there was Light and Dark magic, there were Dark and Light rituals as well. While Light rituals were fairly innocent, some could give their users some extraordinary benefits. The advantage was that they didn't have some of the darker requirements like the Dark sided rituals. Dark rituals focused a lot around blood, sacrifice and pain. The uses of virgin girls was well established in such rituals, same as blood of a unicorn, phoenix and other magical creatures. It was true that some Light rituals used some of those ingredients as well but then they were willingly given instead of taking by force.

The rituals Harry and the rest wanted to do were pretty safe and aimed at improving themselves. They had talked about the ritual that gave an increase in magical power, a ritual that allowed them more physical strength and stamina, a ritual that gave the skin a low level

protection against magic to name a few. There were others but those were the most important ones.

"Alright Hermione, what's up?" Tonks asked the bushy-haired girl.

"Okay, since we now have informed Ron and the rest of what's going I thought it would be wise for us to start with the rituals we selected." Hermione explained. "We can't waste any more time on this. We need to get past this issue."

"What's gotten you in such a rush?" Susan said surprised.

"I've been thinking about it for a few days now." Hermione admitted. "The fact is that we want to strengthen our magical core with a ritual that has one of the disadvantages that once it's done we can't use magic for one month."

Yes, but it's worth it." Harry said.

"I didn't say it wasn't Harry but the fact is that for one month after the ritual, you're forbidden to do any magic." Hermione nodded. "While not easy, it's not impossible and a small price to pay for such an increase in power."

"So what's the problem?" Tonks asked her.

"The problem is that we don't know when Voldemort will begin his attacks." Hermione explained. "We can't afford to be caught off guard. Especially not Harry; imagine what would happen if Voldemort attacked Harry during that one month she can't use magic. She'd be helpless against him."

"I hadn't thought of that." Harry said shocked. "That's a serious problem."

"Indeed and that's why we need to start." Hermione nodded. "The sooner that one month is over, the better for us. I propose we do the ritual in groups; you and Tonks first and then Susan and I."

"Why not all together?" Susan asked.

"Because then we'd all be stuck." Tonks understood. "While we can't do magic, you two could still practice and learn. Meanwhile, Harry

and I will make potions, work on stamina and physical training and studying theory and so on. Then once we can use magic again, we switch."

"Exactly." Hermione smiled at Tonks. "That way we don't lose time. If the two that can't do magic need something done, they can ask the other two for help."

"Very well." Harry said agreeing with the plan. "What do we need to do for this ritual?"

"It's not that difficult really." Susan said taking the book. "All we need is to take a potion, recite a rather long chant and then another potion."

"How long does it take to brew both potions?" Tonks wanted to know.

"A week." Susan said after double-checking. "Like I said, it's fairly easy to perform this ritual."

"Alright, let's get started." Harry nodded.

"Hold on, I still got something." Hermione said. "I figured Susan and I could do the other rituals during this month before we take the other one. Would there be any complications by doing that?" She asked Susan.

"No, all these rituals are perfectly safe to mingle." Susan reassured them. "It can't harm you in any way, no matter the order you take them."

"Okay, than I propose you and I do the ritual for enhanced psychical strength and stamina next week and the ritual for magical protection the week after that." Hermione said.

"Fine by me." Susan smiled.

The four girls then moved on to the potion lab to get started on the various potions they would need to perform the rituals. Like Susan had said, the potions weren't all that difficult to make and the ingredients were easy to get a hold of. Once the potions were started, most needed to cure for some time, the girls went on to explain to the adults what they were planning to do. Needless to say,



the adults disagreed at first but with all four girls being stubborn and having some damn good explanations and reasons, they relented and agreed. They still wanted to be informed whenever they choose to perform a ritual, just to make sure it was safe to use it. The girls agreed without protest.

A week later Harry and the girls were ready to perform the first set of rituals. All four of them planned to do the Strength and Stamina Enhancement ritual and the Magical Protection ritual that night while Harry and Tonks would also perform the Magical Core enhancement ritual as well. All the rituals needed was a potion and a long chant to recite so things were pretty easy.

It didn't take them long to do the first two rituals so Harry and Tonks were now preparing to do the last and most important one. This included drinking a very vile tasting potion and a Magical Chant that took almost five minutes to recite. Following that was another potion but this one tasted less awful. According to the book the effects of the ritual should be felt almost immediately after taking the second potion.

"Anything?" Hermione asked curious.

"I feel strange." Harry said not exactly knowing how to explain what she was feeling. "It's like my core is locked away. I can still feel my magic but it's like I can't access it."

"It feels the same for me." Tonks nodded. "Very unnerving feeling, I must say. I don't think we could use magic even if we wanted to."

"Well, it's only for one month." Hermione smiled apologetic.

"A month sure feels long right now." Harry muttered.

Tonks agreed with Harry on that point. For someone whose entire life was surrounded by magic, the idea of not being able to use was very unsettling but they knew what the advantages would be once that month was over. It would be a long month but it would be worth it. At least she hoped it would be.

It took Harry and Tonks two days to get used to the feeling of not being able to access their magical core. The first day had been very difficult for both of them and Susan and Hermione had to stop once

or twice from using magic. So seeing as they couldn't do anything else, Harry and Tonks put their heads together and started thinking about what they could do during that month.

It had been the visit of Fred and George that had given them an idea to work on some useful items they might need. The twins were very busy with trying to invent some stuff they could use during the war and they had found several neat items. They had found a way to recreate some of their famous pranks into something useful for the war. They had created more of the Peruvian Darkness Powder and managed to seal it into a glass vial. All they had to do was throw the vial to the ground, causing it to break, and the room turned instant black. They had many more to show but they wanted to finish working on them.

It was during a brainstorm session with Remus that Harry and Tonks found what they would be working on. Now that they couldn't do magic, Harry and Tonks couldn't go out and gather information about Death Eaters and Voldemort so they had to find another way. Nobody was willing to let Susan and Hermione do that job so they were stuck. It was Remus who gave them an idea when he mentioned how Muggles used cameras and microphones to listen into conversations.

"Moony, that's brilliant." Harry exclaimed happily. "I'm sure we can come up with something like that."

"Sounds like you already have an idea?" Tonks asked.

"I do." Harry nodded confidently. "Moony, do you remember the mirrors my dad and Sirius used to have?"

"Of course, those were some of the best inventions we made." Remus nodded proudly. "Took us months to figure out the enchantments for them. I remember how your dad and Sirius used those mirrors during detentions."

"Do you remember the spells involved?" Harry asked enthusiastically.

"I'm sure I can find them somewhere." Remus nodded after thinking a bit. "Why?"

"What if we created a device that works like those mirrors?" Harry explained her idea. "The mirrors allowed people to talk and listen to what the other said. So what if we use that concept to create something that records conversations? Everything that is said could be able to be heard on the other end."

"That's a great idea." Tonks said impressed, kissing Harry. "That way we wouldn't have to go out anymore and risk exposing ourselves."

"Just one problem, someone would have to listen to the conversations at all times." Remus said. "Not to mention all the useless things we would hear. It would take a long time to find something of use in all that talking."

"What about a Auto-Writing Quill? " Tonks said getting an idea. "If we use several of them to write down conversations we wouldn't have to listen in all the time."

"Excellent idea." Remus agreed. "I should have thought of that."

"Would we be able to spell the device to activate when certain code words are spoken?" Harry wondered. "Like for instance, if someone says the word 'Death Eater' or 'You-Know-Who', the device would start transmitting and the Quill starts writing it down."

"Shouldn't be too hard." Remus agreed with the idea. "I'll search for my notes once I get home."

"You know Moony, there's more than enough room here" Harry said to him. "You're welcome to stay with us."

"Thank you Harry but I think it's best for now that I stay at my place." Remus thanked her. "If things get too dangerous, I'll come straight here."

"Okay, it's your decision." Harry nodded.

Meanwhile at Hogwarts, four students were preparing for their first study session. They had received several pieces of parchments with spells and magic that they needed to learn. The spells focused on shields and protective magic as that was the most important part but

several offensive spells were included as well. Ron, Neville, Ginny and Luna met up in the Room of Requirement without being noticed by anyone. Getting there wasn't easy as they didn't have Harry's Map any more but they managed just as well.

"Okay, Hermione send us several spells." Ron started. "She and Harry told us not to worry about learning all of them in one go but rather to see which ones we can do easily and then move on."

"Makes sense, I guess." Neville nodded. "Some people are better than others at different types of magic."

"Exactly so we have one, maybe two hours to practice." Ron said picking a defensive and offensive spell of the list that seemed cool. The others chose a few spells as well and started practicing.

Ron chose a spell that made a shield appear which could be used to rebound spells to the caster. It was the same principle as the "Protego" spell but of higher level. One of the requirements was that you needed to know the 'Protego' spell to be able to master this one. This was not a problem for Ron as everyone who had been part of the DA last year, knew the spell thanks to Harry.

Neville chose to learn an offensive spell first. He selected a spell that conjured shackles around the arms and legs of the victim, making it impossible to move. It was a very useful spell, once combined with a follow-up spell, which could be a stunner or something more permanent. Neville didn't think about that just yet and preferred to learn the spell first. He asked the room for a mannequin to practice on.

Ginny, as feisty as always, also chose an offensive spell but something more hurtful. She chose a spell that ripped the muscles in the arms and legs of the victim. To those hit by the spell, it would seem as if they pulled every muscle in their body all at once. Not an enjoyable feeling to say the least but Ginny decided that mercy was lost on Death Eaters so she didn't feel bad about learning such a spell.

Luna chose one of the more unusual spells. It was a wide area spell which made a thick mist appear, making it very hard to see for everyone but the caster. It was a spell that could be used to trap

enemies and catch them by surprise or for retreat from dangerous situations. It was also one of the harder spells Harry and Hermione had given them but Luna didn't care. She was determined to protect the few friends she had and this was how she would keep them safe. She didn't feel much for inflicting harm to others, even Death Eaters but she wanted to help and support Harry.

An hour later Ron called for a small break and the four of them sat down, catching their breath and telling the others what they were learning. They all agreed that they were learning some very neat spells but realized that mastering them would take a lot more effort than they thought. Still, they knew that it was worth it if one day they could save themselves and others with what they had learned.

"I think we should let those who join decide what spells they want to learn," Neville mentioned. "That way each of us can find what they're good at and we don't learn the same thing. Also, some people will prefer to stay in the background."

"Neville is right," Luna said. "I don't like hurting people but I don't mind learning magic to keep others safe from harm. I think I'll take a more supportive role, like the spell I'm learning. I can help our side by causing interference with the bad guys."

"That's an excellent idea Luna," Ginny exclaimed knowing that the girl was right. Luna was too kind to cause others pain, even though others hurt her more often than not. "While you distract them, the rest of us can either take them down or get away."

"Maybe we could figure some tactical plans in case of an attack," Ron said. "It would be nice if we had some kind of plan instead of having to come up with something during an attack."

"Great idea, Ron," Neville agreed. "I'm sure we can work something out if we put our heads together."

After the break, everyone worked hard for another hour until they had to return to their common rooms. They didn't want to raise suspicion by being absent for long periods of time. They agreed to meet up again the day after the next to practice some more.

Meanwhile Amelia was briefing Alastor Moody about what she wanted him to achieve. She had managed to get him to come back to the Ministry to teach the Aurors some much needed skills but first they would need to weed out the bad apples. Meaning anyone who had the Dark Mark; they didn't expect to find any under the younger Aurors as that was before their time but some of the older crowd could be marked. Therefore today was going to be a surprise inspection for everyone in the corps. They would call them in one by one, under the guise of an interview to determine what kind of training they would need. In reality all of them would be questioned and checked for the Dark Mark. One of the first things Amelia did was give Kingsley authorization to use Veritaserum in case of doubt.

Kingsley had argued that he wanted to question all of them under the truth serum as he didn't want to take the risk of having men who followed Voldemort in his ranks. Having such men could always mean that they would get betrayed or that information could be spread to their enemies. No, he thought it best to simply remove everyone that was a danger to the Ministry and the Wizarding World in general. Those that bore the Dark Mark would earn a one way ticket to Azkaban until they could receive a trial. Dumbledore had agreed that this was indeed the best action that could be taken at the moment. He did fear however that Voldemort would simply march into Azkaban, like he did before, and free those men, thus causing his army to grow. That's why Amelia was now looking to find an alternative way to imprison them.

"So you want me to get them into shape huh?" Alastor grinned.

"More than that." Amelia shook her head. "I want them ready to fight Death Eaters by new year. I don't care how you do it but get it done. We won't stand a chance against Voldemort if our Aurors are too weak and scared to fight his army. You and several others were there during the first war and you know how we got our ass handed to us several times. I fear things might even be worse this time around so we can't afford to sit around and do nothing."

"Damn right, I always said we needed a special task force to deal with the likes of Death Eaters." Moody grunted. "Don't worry, I'll get it done but don't be surprised if several quit along the line."

"I know." Amelia sighed. "Better to have fifty well trained men than hundred weaklings afraid of their own shadow."

"Very well, I'm glad to see you're screening everyone before starting." Moody said approvingly.

"Kingsley thought it best and I agree." Amelia nodded. "We can't risk having traitors in our camp; we're in a bad situation enough as it is."

"Good, we can never be too careful." Moody said before screaming out. "Constant Vigilance."

Amelia laughed at the old Auror but nodded her agreement because he was right in the end. Better to be safe than sorry in her opinion. She asked if he wanted to be present for the questioning and Moody gave her a look that practically said 'duh?'. She led him to the training facility and entered the room where Kingsley and several trusted Aurors were hard at work. She watched as one of the newer recruits raised his sleeves to show an unblemished arm and let the Aurors cast a few detection spells just in case. Amelia smiled at the young man in thanks and told him that she was glad to see such a promising Auror in her ranks. The man blushed a bit but saluted her and swore that he would do anything in his power to protect the Ministry and the Wizarding World.

"Thank you, Auror Michaels." Amelia said. "I expect great things of you. Show me that you have what it takes to survive Moody's training and perhaps a promotion will be in order."

"Yes Ma'am." The man said before leaving the room.

"Kingsley, what's the verdict so far?" Amelia turned to her new Head of Director.

"Not too bad so far." Kingsley said taking his paper. "We only had one marked Auror so far. A guy by the name of Daniels, low level Auror with a service of over twenty years. We questioned him under Veritaserum but he's nothing more than a low level grunt who thought it would be cool to join the Dark Lord. He admitted to giving information about the Auror force to some of the higher ranked Death Eaters during the first war."

"Any names come up?" Moody asked interested.

"No new ones." Kingsley said. "Lestrage was one of them."

"Any others Aurors that raised suspicions?" Amelia asked.

"A few with questionable moral beliefs, yes." Kingsley nodded. "Several who hold the same Pure-Blood beliefs to a certain degree but none of them would resort to violence to get their point across. They fear Voldemort as much as we do and don't support him or his Death Eaters. Still, might be worth to keep an eye on them just in case."

"I see." Amelia said.

"All in all, we questioned over forty percent of our force and so far only one with the Dark Mark was found." Kingsley said. "I think that's pretty good wouldn't you say."

"I would." Amelia agreed. "Very well, continue and let me know the results. Once we're finished here, we'll see if we can weed out the other departments as well. I want this Ministry to be free of such twisted individuals."

At the end of the screening, seven Aurors with Dark Marks had been found. Most of them were low level but one of them was a Senior Auror who had been in the force since the sixties and had been a Death Eater for almost thirty years. While he hadn't been that high up in the hierarchy, he was well connected and had given tons of classified information to Voldemort. He also provided the names of several others in the Ministry that were soundly in the Dark Lord's camp. Those were immediately arrested and questioned as well.

Three Aurors had been arrested for misuse of authority, corruption and bribery. They had been taken money from several sides to turn a blind eye to some of their criminal activities. They were questioned and Amelia had already issued arrest warrants for the criminals in Knockturn Alley. All in all it had been a very productive day for the Auror corps and many of them felt much safer now that some of the bad apples were gone. They knew now that each and everyone that remained could be trusted and would have their back during battle.

So when Alastor Moody announced that he would train them to fight Death Eaters and that he wouldn't go easy on them, the Auror Corps



acted as one and told him to bring it on. Moody grinned evilly and promptly started his training by having them do laps and physical training until late that night. Oh, how they would regret challenging him he thought. Still, he was hopeful that they would manage to complete his training and become some of the best Aurors in history.

As Tonks and Harry were unable to use any magic for several more weeks, they focused on other things. For example, they brewed enough potions to last several months and had gathered enough resources as well. One of the lower level floors had been turned into one large storage room, complete with temperature regulated areas and stasis rooms, where food and potions could be stored indefinitely. They hoped they wouldn't need such a thing but they figured it was better to safe than sorry.

That had taken about two weeks to complete so there were still two weeks left for both of them. Both suffered greatly from not being able to do magic but they told the others that they could almost feel their magic getting stronger each day. That alone gave them the strength to continue. To keep themselves busy the two worked on the spying devices Harry had come up with. To do so they asked Remus to give them his notes on the two-way mirrors Sirius and Harry's dad had during their time at Hogwarts. It took them almost a week to simply figure out how the connection between the two mirrors worked and they had needed Hermione's, Amelia's, Remus' and Andromeda's help to do so.

Now that they had unveiled one of the biggest and complex parts, it went a lot smoother to figure out the rest. The mirrors were activated by using a code word or phrase so they simply needed to copy that part and change the parameter for the device to activate when words like 'Death Eater', 'You-Know-Who', 'Voldemort' and several other words.

Next they needed to connect the device to the Auto-Dictation Quills so that the conversations would be recorded on paper. That was pretty standard as well as the Quills were already programmed to write down what the user wanted.

"I'm curious." Harry said. "I wonder what kind of things we'll learn."

"Outside of everyday conversations?" Tonks shrugged. "Probably not very much but any information can be useful. While we might not

learn much about Voldemort this way, it might give us an idea of who's on our side and who's not. Can't hurt to find several more allies."

"Guess not." Harry sighed. "I'm glad Amelia is achieving much progress with the Ministry. Getting rid of several Death Eaters and criminals in the Ministry will do a lot of good."

"I know but it will still take awhile before the Ministry is ready to fight Voldemort." Tonks agreed.

"Are we doing enough?" Harry asked as she became suddenly unsure about everything she had been doing.

"We've been through this already." Tonks admonished her lover. "We're doing everything we can so no need to fret."

"I know but sometimes I feel so powerless." Harry said.

"I understand but we're doing great and we've made so much progress with our plans." Tonks nodded. "We'll be ready when the time comes. I'm sure of it."

"You're right." Harry smiled. "Thanks, Tonks."

"Anytime, baby." Tonks said taking Harry in her arms. "Now how about you and I go for a nice hot bath? We've done enough for today."

Harry nodded and let Tonks drag her to the bathroom. Tonks quickly closed the door and locked it securely, not that she needed to worry about anyone coming inside as they all knew not to enter their personal floor without permission. She stepped over to the bathtub and turned the knob, letting the water fill the tub. She asked Harry to hand her the bath salts that she loved so much and added it to the water.

"Come here." Tonks said to Harry. When Harry stood before her she kissed her passionately and pressed her body against Harry's. The younger girl eagerly returned the kiss and her arms wrapped around Tonks' waist, holding her close. Tonks' hands started to undress Harry and touched her sensitive skin making Harry shudder in pleasure. When Harry stood topless in front of her, Tonks bend

down and slowly opened the buttons of Harry's pants. Slowly she pulled them down and allowed Harry to step out of them. Tonks placed kisses along Harry's belly button and her fingers pulled down the panties, to reveal a small patch of red pubic hair that always drove her crazy.

"God, you are so beautiful." Tonks said standing back up, kissing Harry. "I'll never get tired of seeing you."

"Thanks." Harry said with a small blush.

"Help me?" Tonks said grabbing her t-shirt.

"Of course." Harry said with a big smile on her face. Harry slipped her hands under the T-shirt and softly traced Tonks' skin to her breasts, giving them a gently squeeze. She then told Tonks to lift her arms so she could pull the t-shirt over her head. Tonks obeyed and let Harry take of the T-shirt, which landed on the other side of the room. Harry stepped behind Tonks and held her in a hug, kissing her neckline and let her hands roam over Tonks' upper body. After several seconds of this Harry opened Tonks' pants and slipped her hand inside. Tonks moaned when she felt Harry's hand between her legs and she rubbed her legs together. She groaned in displeasure however when the hand disappeared. Harry smiled at the response but simply continued undressing her lover. Soon the pants landed next to the t-shirt. Harry turned Tonks around so they were facing each other. Both smiled and exchanged a few kisses before Harry kneeled down and gently peeled Tonks' panties off her. Tonks gasped as she felt Harry's warm breath on her skin.

"I love you so much." Harry said to her.

"Me too, baby." Tonks said taking the red head in her arms. "I love you so much I don't want to pass a single day without you."

After sharing another kiss they both stepped in the bath and sat down with Harry sitting between Tonks' legs. They simple sat down in silence, each enjoying the moment and dreaming of many more such moments in the future. A future where they could simply be a young, happy couple in love without the threat of a murderous Dark Lord after their lives and that of their friends.

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